THE HISTORY OF Miſs MARIA BARLOWE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

HISTORY

OF

Miſs MARIA BARLOWE.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER XL.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

MY work does not ſo wholly engroſs me, but I will find time to talk to my dear Eliza as matter ariſes.—For you muſt know, that yeſterday, being in Mrs. Walford's ſhop, Mr. Rowe came in; I had not time to make a retreat, which I certainly ſhould have done had I been aware of his coming.—He made a ſlight bow, and for a moment did not ſeem to recollect me; but glancing towards me, as he was giving orders for ſomething—

ſure I am not miſtaken, cried he, is it not Miſs Barlowe? I bluſhed to the eyes, and anſwered, yes, Sir; I hope you are well—Very well, my dear young lady; how long have you been in this part of the world? But a few days, Sir.—Do you make any ſtay?—I knew not what to reply—when Mrs. Walford, ſeeing my embarraſſment, ſaid, be pleaſed to walk in, Sir, I did not know you were acquainted with Miſs Barlowe.—When we were ſeated in her little parlour, he aſked if I had lodgings there.—Falſe ſhame, thought I, begone—Why really, Sir, to be ingenuous, I both lodge and board here—the good woman of the houſe was once a ſervant at my father's, and has generouſly offered me an aſylum with her, as I have no home.—He ſuppreſſed the riſing tear, good hearted young man!—ſaid, he hoped I would be known to Mrs. Rowe, and ſhe ſhould wait on me

firſt,

firſt, if I choſe it. No, Sir; that would be a punctilio to which I have no pretenſions or inclination; I am rejoiced to hear you are ſo happy with an amiable wife, and have but one objection to frequenting your houſe, if agreeable to her—are you ſtill intimate with Mr. Brightley, Sir? Yes, Madam, we have not dropped our acquaintance, but he does not come often.—Miſs Fanſhaw viſits my wife too, ſometimes with him, and often by herſelf.—I fancy their affair ſtill goes on—but I truſt, after all that has paſſed, either or both of them would not diſcompoſe you.—Why it ought not, Sir, I own; or would it, I believe, for any remains of tenderneſs (I ſpeak to you without reſerve); but in my fallen ſtate I can't ſay I wiſh to attract the gaze of people to look down on me.—No, no, Miſs Barlowe, they may look up to you, but down I defy them. You are very

good, Sir, to give affiance to the indigent and diffident.—He ſaid I muſt not refuſe an invitation, which he was ſure his wife would ſend me very ſoon, and took an affectionate leave.

When he was gone, I told Mrs. Walford I had been more intimate with that gentleman than I had at firſt informed her; and thought it as well to let her know in what kind of connexion I had ſtood with Brightley.—She was perfectly amazed, and ſaid he was ſoon to be married to a Miſs Fanſhaw, an heireſs of great fortune—a baſe fellow—ſhe always looked on him to be the ſweeteſt tempered young gentleman, little thinking how he had ſerved me. I ſmiled, but did not mention a word of the tenders Mr. Rowe had made me, for theſe ſimple, well-meaning people will talk, and Mrs. Rowe might not like to hear any

thing

thing of it. There was great delicacy in his not expatiating on the topic; don't you think there was, Eliza? For what could he have ſaid but at ſome little expence of his wife.

And ſo you ſee, my dear, that I have renewed the acquaintance; and as it is ſuch a reputable one, I hope no conſequences will follow that may injure poor me, for I will open the whole affair to Mrs. Rowe, and beg her not to diſcover me to either of them: if Brightley ſhould at any time come unexpectedly, ſhe will ſecure a retreat for me, and if the young lady ſhould come alone, I will deſire them not to call me by any name, and then I may have an opportunity of ſeeing her, which I have long wiſhed for, and ſhall be able to judge of her humour and mental faculties perhaps. I will be unprejudiced, for ſhe is no rival now of mine you know.

In an hour or two after Mr. Rowe's departure, came a very polite card, with joint compliments from them, desiring the favour of my company this afternoon; so I am preparing to wait on them, and in the evening will scribble particulars to the friend of my heart.

Just returned from Mr. Rowe's—he introduced his lady and me to each other in the most polite, nay more, in the most endearing manner. She is a tall, thin woman, very genteely made, with a complexion tolerably clear; her hair extremely dark, and very black eyes, not very sprightly ones; she is not a great talker, but seems a very good young woman; I should take her to be about three and twenty.

You know, for a country girl, I am not very reserved, at least I have an inherent

herent openneſs ; and, after a few general things were talked of (I ſhould premiſe they both preſſed me to come often to their houſe) I introduced the capital ſubject, and ſaid I ſhould often trouble them if I might bring my work, and they would ſubſcribe to other conditions. Mrs. Rowe ſmiled ; and I ſaid the other conditions, Madam, are theſe, that you will let me know when you expect Mr. Brightley, and if he ſhould come unexpectedly, that you will ſecure a retreat for me ; and if his lady elect ſhould come alone, that you will not call me by name, as I do not intend to avoid her, for I have a little womaniſh curioſity to be gratified. Mrs. Rowe ſaid if the conditions were much harder ſhe would readily ſubſcribe to them, for the pleaſure of my company ; that bringing my work would be peculiarly agreeable to her, as ſhe was

fond of, and ſpent much time at her needle.

We paſſed a moſt pleaſant afternoon —I had an unuſual flow of ſpirits, and think I have not chattered ſo vivaciouſly ſince the death of my dear father.—I was, in ſhort,

Like the gay birds that ſing us to repoſe,
Content and careleſs for to-morrow's fare.

Mr. Rowe attended me quite home —and here, my dear Eliza, I will put an end to this letter. You uſed to love I ſhould be minute, and minuteneſs have run it into length. But adieu, adieu! Angels guard you and

Your ever grateful,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER XLI.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

TO receive a letter from my dear Maria, written in a ſprightly vein, is as pleaſing as it is unuſual.—I rejoice that you have ſuch amiable acquaintances as Mr. Rowe and his wife—but I am afraid for your peace, in caſe any interviews ſhould happpen between you and that forbid young fellow, and there is a probability that there may, notwithſtanding all your caution; and, my dear, though that curioſity you expreſs is natural, I do not think it is altogether ſafe. But I will not be always croaking like a raven—— Enjoy the preſent, my dear Maria, and

encourage your returning innocent vivacity.

I can 't write very frequent or long letters juſt now, but you are well aſſured of the unabating affection of your true and

Faithful friend,

ELIZA HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My Dear Eliza,

I HAVE been ſeveral times at Mr. Rowe's to dinner, tea, and ſupper, and yet the interview your friendly heart dreads for me has not yet happened. But I have another matter to inform Eliza of, you muſt know here is a young man with whom I have made an acquaintance that gives me great pleaſure; he has abſolutely one of the beſt hearts, and, according to my judgment, as good an underſtanding as ever I met with; he has lately been ill, and was recommended to this air, and has a little lodging very near Mrs. Walford's; he comes

here very frequently, and reads to me while I work; the good folks of the houſe ſay he is in love with your poor Maria—he has never told me ſo yet, and I hope he will not, for I muſt certainly deny him. But here is a meſſenger poſt haſte to ſummon me to dine with Mrs. Rowe, ſo other particulars relating to my friend Mr. Clarkſon, muſt be deferred a little; I may well ſtile him friend, for we ſeem to have a ſimilarity of ſentiments that will conſtitute a friendſhip, but will never, on my part, I am ſure, ripen into love.

I can't go to bed till I have given my dear Eliza an account of this day's tranſactions—I have ſeen the redoubtable Miſs Fanſhaw—After a plentiful and agreeable dinner with only my two good friends, as we were lolling and enjoying the ſweets of unreſerved converſation, an equipage drove

drove to the door; when Mrs. Rowe deſcried it, ſhe ſaid it is Miſs Fanſhaw, as I am alive,—ſhall I be denied; by no means, Madam, if ſhe is alone. Mr. Rowe ſaid ſhe was, and in a moment ſhe entered the room—there is great freedom in her manner. My dear Sir and Madam, I pay you an early viſit as the days are not yet very long, and I muſt return ſoon —ſhe made me a low curtſie, and we all ſat down.—I felt myſelf embarraſſed; owing, I believe, to the ſplendidneſs of her dreſs; for I caſt an involuntary glance down on my own mourning garb, which though genteel, is far from being ſplendid. And here I will deſcribe her perſon —She is of the tall middle ſize, far from thin; her eyes dark grey, and her hair, I believe, for it was powdered, of a darkiſh brown, as are her eye-brows; a florid complexion; her noſe a little aquiline, her mouth rather wide, but adorned with

with a pretty good ſet of teeth; her cheek bones a little, and but a little too high, as the Scotch ladies often are, but altogether what is call'd a handſome ſhowy woman.

Company came in, all ſtrangers to me, but ſeveral of them known to Miſs Fanſhaw; ſhe bore a great part in the converſation, of which I will give you a ſpecimen, on its turning on the pleaſant ſituation of Mr. Rowe's houſe—She cried, how I envy you this charming place during the four vernal months; but my poor father is ſo wedded to Lothbury, there is abſolutely no perſuading him to breathe the free air for two days together. Ay, but my dear Nancy, ſaid Mr. Rowe, when you are wedded to ſomething elſe, you may make yourſelf amends, and by the elegance of your villa ſhame our diminutive cottage. Why really, replied

ſhe,

ſhe, I believe I muſt marry ſoon, in order to indulge my ſocial ſpirit, and go out and in as I like—for you ſhall judge ladies and gentlemen of the eligibleneſs of my preſent ſituation—my father expects me down to breakfaſt as the parlour clock is ſtriking eight, and if I exceed five minutes, he lectures all the time he ſips his tea; when we have grumbled to the end of it, perhaps if it is a fine morning I call for my hat and cloak—What, going out already, where now? May be I ſay to walk in the Park, or ſome auction, or ſomething or other—Then, you don't tread in your mother's ſteps, ſhe always went into the kitchen in a morning, looked in the larder, and gave orders for dinner.—Sir, Hudſon knows what is for dinner.—I ſuppoſe we ſhall dine at the amazing late hour of two.—I will be ſure to be in time, and away I ſcud—and, perhaps, juſt as the Park begins to fill with

Chriſtian

Chriſtian people, who are digeſting their breakfaſt, or the auction-room becomes delightfully crowded with one's acquaintance, I am obliged to make a precipitate retreat, and carve, in my morning accoutrements, for half a dozen muſty cits—Then ſuch a jargon of the price of ſtock, of the arrival of the Charming Peggy, or ſuch ſolicitude for the fate of the Two Friends, or ſuch wondering that old ſuch-a-one made no more money, whom they all rated at a plumb; that I am fatigued to death and worried to diſtraction—But when he is in a very good humour, I obtain the chariot, as I have done to-day, and forget my cares, as I do now in this good company. We all laughed, and ſhe went on—You muſt know I was in a ſad dilemma about a fortnight ago. Papa took it in his head to go a little way into Eſſex, and propoſed to be out two nights, I diſpatched cards to ſome dozen of

friends, who all honoured my invitation, and we were enjoying ourſelves with three tables, and the room well lighted, but the ſhutters cloſed, when, ring, ring, ring, at the door; and Hudſon, with a face as pale as a corpſe, told me her maſter was come home—my ſympathiſing friends were in the utmoſt conſternation, but I begged them to ſit ſtill, and ſpeak as low as poſſible, and then went out with Hudſon; told her ſhe ſhould ſay I was gone to drink tea with Miſs Staples, whom he likes prodigiouſly, and ſlipping on my hat and cloak, ſhe pretended to let me in, in a few minutes. The poor old gentleman found himſelf not well, and thought it beſt to return immediately—I was vaſtly frightened to be ſure, perſuaded him to go-to bed and have ſome ſack whey—but then he lies over the feſtive room—ſeeming to recollect myſelf, I beg'd he would lie in the green chamber, as I had

inadvertently

inadvertently given orders for his room to be waſhed, and it was not near dry, and as much as his life was worth to ſleep there; the other room, I aſſured him, was perfectly ſafe, as a gentleman had ſlept there ſo lately, and the bed well aired—Well, poor ſoul, he implicitly followed my advice, I carried up his whey myſelf, and cordially wiſhing him a good night returned to my friends, who had got into a habit of ſpeaking low, and about eleven we had a pretty collation ſerved up in dumb ſhew, in which there was much novelty and humour, and about two we ſeparated all highly pleaſed with the adventures of the evening. You may be ſure, my dear Eliza, we all laughed again; and Mr. Rowe, archly enough, ſaid, Nancy, you have an intriguing ſpirit, a certain perſon muſt take care—I am glad Mrs. Rowe has not your talents. O you ſatirical monſter, what an inference.

The

The company ſeem'd all pleaſed with her, and I dare ſay Brightely finds more delight in her company than ever he did in that of your poor inſipid Maria.—But enough for this time from

Your affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

L E T.

LETTER XLIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My Dear Eliza,

I BEGIN another letter, and ſhall ſend both, or perhaps three together, for I have not quite done with Miſs Fanſhaw. By the ſpecimen I have given you of her converſation, you will perceive ſhe is lively, and not deficient in wit or underſtanding; but there is a vein of levity runs through her talk, not ſuited to my taſte; even at that time, when early youth, and flattering proſpects inſpired me with joy and vivacity, filial love too much occupied my boſom ever to permit me to treat the dear object of it with the

the ſhadow of diſreſpect, or could I ever be inattentive to his ſlighteſt ails—O that that object was ſtill here to receive my willing tenders of duty and affection!—But avaunt, ſelfiſh wiſhes, it is the loſs of my own happineſs, not his, that dictates theſe murmurings.

Miſs Fanſhaw went away early—the reſt of the Company ſoon followed—I obſerved ſhe eyed me very much all the time ſhe ſtaid. And Mr. Rowe ſaid, when he handed her to her carriage, ſhe aſked who I was—He ſaid an acquaintance of Mrs. Rowe's; ſhe is an exceeding pretty girl, ſays ſhe, but ſhe looks very grave and ſays very little, is ſhe in love; Or has ſhe not the gift of utterance? I replied, added he, that I believed the young lady had met with much adverſity; I did not think ſhe was in love, and I knew ſhe could ſpeak well on all ſubjects. I

bowed

bowed to Mr. Rowe's compliment—They aſked my opinion of Miſs Fanſhaw, I told them truly, I thought her handſome and ſprightly, and very entertaining company. I ſtaid with them to a late hour. When I returned there was the worthy Clarkſon waiting for me; he had a new publication in his pocket, of which he he wanted my opinion; I deſired him to leave it, till I could find time to look it over, on which he took a moſt reſpectful leave; and, upon my word, my dear, I begin to fear that the young man looks with partiality on your friend.

You will think, Eliza, that ſcribbling ſo much as I do, and ſpending ſo much time at Mr. Rowe's, my work goes on but ſlowly, but really it will turn to good account, for I take it with me, and I borrow my hours of writing from ſleep; part of that loan has been devoted to my reverend

verend friend the Doctor, to whom I have given an account of my removal from Mr. Freeland's, together with my motives for coming hither—it was my duty ſo to do.

I hope to eſcape Brightley entirely, or at leaſt to bear a tranſient ſight of him without emotion; really, my Eliza, I begin to think the old wound is entirely healed; there is no barbed arrow that requires the hand of ſome honeſt man to draw. I ſhall, I truſt, be eaſy and contented in my preſent ſituation, and only wiſh for ſome account of my long loſt brother to make me ſo. The ſmiles of chearfulneſs with which this good family ſurround me, gives me to think I am a moſt welcome gueſt; and the thoughts that I ſhall not be a burden they are unable to bear, gives alacrity to my ſpirits, and ſwiftneſs to my fingers; and I am daily taught

taught how eaſily the calls of nature are ſupplied, and how few are our real wants; but frequent yawns tell me, that ſleep is a natural and powerful call which I muſt obey—ſo good night my friend, my ſiſter, my monitreſs, what are you not to

Your's,

Barlow

MARIA [redacted]

LET-

LETTER XLIV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

WHEN I laſt addreſſed my deareſt Eliza I was ſerene and tranquil; health, content, and innocence (a goodly train!) were become my viſitants; but do not be alarmed, they are not fled, only a little perturbation, like an intruding and troubleſome gueſt, has interrupted the pleaſure of their ſweet ſociety; but to have done with figures—You muſt know I was loooking out of a window that commands the road, when who ſhould whiſk by but Brightley and Miſs Fanſhaw in a phaeton; I drew not back the very inſtant I diſcovered them, ſurpriſe prevented me; I caught her eye

before the carriage (ſwift as it was) could paſs; I obſerved ſhe jogged his elbow, and he turned his head; I then had ſenſe enough to draw back ſo far that I am ſure he could not know who it was. I retired to a back room, but my fingers were unſteady for half an hour; however, I rallied my ſpirits, and enjoyed the reſt of the day as uſual, not venturing to peep out.

The next morning Mr. and Mrs. Rowe called me to take a walk, and inſiſted on my ſpending the whole day with them.—Mrs. Rowe ſaid, we ſaw nothing of you all day yeſterday, my dear; no, Madam, you had company. Then I perceive you know who they were.—I told her the incident of the window, and hoped Miſs Fanſhaw did not recollect me, though, by her motion, I feared ſhe did. Yes, your haunts are diſcovered, Miſs Barlowe, replied Mr. Rowe, for ſhe mentioned you,

you, and ſaid I ſaw that pretty girl in mourning, who was here the other day looking out of a window at the ſhop-keeper's—for goodneſs ſake who is ſhe? Ay, ſaid Brightley, who the devil is it? Nancy has been telling me ever ſince of a beautiful piece of ſtill-life ſhe ſaw here, but you would not tell her name; is it a ſecret? We both heſitated; on which they cried out, nay, there is ſome myſtery in this. And did you diſcover me, ſaid I?—Why really, Madam, ſaid Mr. Rowe, we could not help it—for, ſaid Brightley, laughing, it is not an incognita of your's, Rowe, for your wife is in the ſecret; and the lady reddened, and ſaid, well, don't pry into other people's affairs. We were then a little piqued, and I replied, why, to tell you the truth, it is no other than the charming (yes I added charming) Maria Barlowe. Miſs Fanſhaw bridled, and bluſhed a deeper

dye, and Brightley only ſaid, *indeed*; and hung down his head. And was that all that paſſed, my good Sir?—Yes indeed, my dear, ſaid Mrs. Rowe, for we turned off to other ſubjects immediately; but I thought there was a kind of reſerve which prevented that mirth that uſed to prevail. I ſighed, and ſaid, I hoped he would not trouble himſelf or me with any notice; in which wiſh they both joined.—Well, my dear, this was on Thurſday, and between that and Saturdy I was ſerene and happy. Clarkſon's aſſiduities, agreeable behaviour, and ſenſible converſation greatly contributing to my amuſement (by the way I fear he likes me); when, on Saturdy, no perſon being in the ſhop but Mrs. Walford's ſervant girl, who ſhould come in and enquire for me but Brightley; ſhe innocently ſhewed him into the little room where I was ſitting alone—you might have knock'd me down with a feather

feather—he made a profound reverence, and motioned to take my hand; I withdrew it, but not ſcornfully, like an offendded miſtreſs, for I wiſhed to appear only ſo as an acquaintance that harboured no reſentment againſt him; I curtiſied, and anſwered to his enquiries with great civility—I did not deſire him to ſit down, but he took a chair, hem'd, and was at a loſs what to ſay; at laſt, to help him out, I ſaid it is very fine weather, Sir, for the time of the year—Yes, Miſs Barlowe—and he fixed his eyes upon me; I turn'd from his eager gaze, and ſaid, like a fool, (for to be ſure it was very ſilly) what has procured me the *honour* of this viſit? I laid an ironical ſtreſs upon the word honour. Ah! Miſs Barlowe, how can you aſk that queſtion? can you ſuppoſe that when I was informed you were in this neighbourhood I could forbear ſeeing you if you would permit me? And

he ſighed and looked as he was wont to do. Why really, Mr. Brightl y, ſince you talk in this ſtrain, I muſt tell you if I had dreamt of ſuch an intention, or the poor girl had known my mind, you might have been diſappointed. Why will you not permit me to ſee you then? Not if I can help it, Sir. Cruelty is no part of your character. Cruelty! ſaid I, and ſmiled. Mrs. Walford knowing who was there came in; he (O the inſinuating wretch) ſaid to her, my dear Madam will you permit me ſometimes to drink a diſh of tea with you; you have two fine children—they had followed her in; the poor woman did not know what to ſay; he careſſed the little ones and gave them money, ſomething conſiderable for children. I ſaid Mrs. Walford I believe your dinner is ready, on which he was forced to go.

And

And now, my dear, let me tell you how I feel myſelf. And not to hide a corner of my heart, I muſt confeſs that I found certain vibrations while he was talking, that told me he might too eaſily reinſtate himſelf there, were I not armed as I am by the aſſurances of his devoirs to another woman, and reflections on his abandoning me at a time when barbarity was added to perfidy. So do not, my dear Eliza, be afraid for me, I have ſtood the ſhock of an interview (which ſhall be the laſt) with ſome degree of ſelf-approbation.

In the evening I went to Mr. Rowe's, he had not been there, they were in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment at his conduct; but, my deareſt Eliza, favour me with a line or two as ſoon as poſſible; it is long ſince I heard from you.

I have finiſhed my work and received my wages, and time flies upon more downy wings than of late he has done; after wearing deep mourning longer than the preſent faſhion preſcribes, I have changed my garb.

I am more and more delighted with the very worthy Clarkſon; if he likes me, I wiſh he would tell me ſo, for he is a perſon that ought not to be kept in ſuſpence, and a tender attachment to him can never warm the heart of your

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

I HAVE my dear Maria's letters before me, to which I ſhall briefly anſwer, not for want of inclination to more copious prattling, but becauſe my time is ſo much employed about my poor mother.

You have made me perfectly acquainted with Mr. Rowe, his Lady, and Miſs Fanſhaw, ſo excellent are your deſcriptive powers; and I am half in love with the good Clarkſon; and O, my dear Maria, that you were more than half in love with him—he appears to be juſt the perſon under whoſe wings it would rejoice my heart

to hear the orphan Marria was ſafely ſheltered.—You ſay nothing of his circumſtances, but you are now fitted for enjoying a competency only; and why, my dear Maria, do you ſo poſitively aver you cannot like him, ſhould he make the offer. You was peremptory with regard to Mr. Rowe, but then the affair with Brightley was more recent.—What an audacity in that ſpecious fellow to interrupt you—you behaved properly on the occaſion—but by all means, my dear, avoid any more interviews—I am ſure he is one of thoſe deſpicable males who rejoice as much in numerous conqueſts, as ſome of our filly ſex; but deſpiſe him—the "conſummation (between him and the fine lady you have deſcribed) is devoutly to be wiſhed." He is not worthy of my Maria, were ſhe deſtitute of beauty—that heart and underſtanding can only be

happy

happy with ſimilar excellence. Be not afraid of tiring me with your letters, they form the greateſt and indeed only amuſement of

Your moſt affectionate,

E. HARWOOD.

LETTER XLVI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

AFTER a week's ſilence, I proceed to anſwer my dear Eliza.—Mr. Clarkſon has made the wiſhed-for declaration—you know why I wiſh'd for it—he beſought my private ear for a quarter of an hour; and, with much heſitation, and every mark of genuine affection, intreated me to accept of his devoirs—but firſt, I ſhould tell you, he with great frankneſs told me every particular of his circumſtances—that he had no fortune, that his emoluments from his place amounted to two hundred a-year, but that he had a

mother and ſiſter who are partly dependent on him, and he is obliged to be at ſome extraordinary expence on account of appearance; but if I would condeſcend to ſhare his pittance, unworthy as it was of my acceptance, he ſhould not envy the maſter of unbounded domains. —I ſhould have ſtopped him at firſt from the detail of his affairs, but thought Eliza muſt know every particular.

I replied; Mr. Clarkſon, your ingenuous detail and generous offer (for I have nothing) demands the moſt ſincere reply: I never can liſten to your declarations of love, I like your company, and I revere your character; to be plain, (for frankneſs is my characteriſtic) I wiſhed for this declaration that I might at once tell you, for I have perceived your partiality, that I could not.—Why, dear Madam, Mrs. Walford has told me,

me, that ſhe believed you had no prejudices in favour of another? Mrs. Walford does not know my heart, Mr. Clarkſon —indeed I hardly know it myſelf; but I doubt there is a ſhadow of partiality towards one unworthy object, and but a ſhadow would determine me againſt giving hope to another while that remained. Your circumſtances ought to be augmented by the woman you marry, conſidering the wiſe and prudent uſe you make of money, and if I was free, and had a large fortune, I know not on whom I could beſtow it better, but as it is, Mr. Clarkſon, the obſtacles are inſurmountable: in the firſt place, I could not give you my whole heart; and, in the ſecond, I could ſooner go to ſervice than narrow your power of doing for ſuch near relations.

He

He replied, the delicacy of my ſentiments only ſerved to heighten his regrets; ſaid he had ſome expectations from a wealthy grand uncle, but as he was capricious, he ſcorned to varniſh over the leaſt part of his affairs.

I replied, as to delicacy, if he was not my ſuperior, he was fully my equal, and though he could be nothing more to me, I begg'd he would be my friend.

He ſaid, ſevere as my ſentence was, the offer of my friendſhip was too charming an offer to forego, though he feared the conſequences; and thus ended our conference.——I have gained another friend; am I not rich?

Mr. Rowe's people think Brightley is gone a journey, Miſs Fanſhaw has not viſited them ſince they were there together.

ther. Clarkſon is going to make a little tour, he aſked me to be of the party;—good-natured creature! I will not put him to any expence. But I muſt lay this by, my dear; how is it that I am not in the writing vein? do I need afflictions to ſpur me on? When my heart is oppreſſed with ſorrow I fly to you, as we do to prayer when urged by ſtrong neceſſity; but when proſperity gilds our path, we forget our prayers and omit our thankſgivings.—So I, when overcharged, find relief by complaints to you, which flow almoſt involuntarily, but when I am eaſy I have not the grace to try to amuſe; however, I will lay this aſide till I have more to ſay.

Three days has this bit of a letter been thrown aſide, in which time I have been deſtitute of genius or gratitude, for the latter muſt

muſt have inſpired the former to produce ſomething for the amuſement of my dear Eliza.—Clarkſon having finiſhed his tour, came to day to ſee his friend; I hoped he had been agreeably entertained; he ſmiled, and ſaid, he had thrown ſome of his reflections on paper. What, ſaid I, you have kept a little journal? I ſhould be glad to ſee it; on which he put the following paper in my hand:

I.

Come, gentle love, with grateful train,
  Aſſiſt my humble lays,
Maria, faireſt of the plain,
  Your every charm diſplays.

II.

Fair form and lovely mien we ſee
  Thro' all her perſon join;
While wit, good ſenſe, and modeſty,
  The charms of perſon join.

III.

III.

Would heav'n indulge my fond requeſt,
'Tis her I make my choice,
Whoſe virtues form her gen'rous breaſt
For the ſublimeſt joys.

IV.

No affectation knows her mind,
No pride can wanton there;
No prudiſh airs in her you find,
She's virtuous, not ſevere.

V.

Free from the fond indulg'd extremes
Of madding joy and grief,
Her temper ſmooths life's rougheſt ſtreams,
And gives to pain relief.

When I had looked it over, I returned it gravely, and ſaid, Mr. Clarkſon, remember we are to be friends and friends only. Do not be diſpleaſed, dear Madam, a ſoft friendſhip will produce theſe effects in a young man who doats upon the

the Muſes, though their favours to him have not been very great.

Now, my dear, don't you think there is an eaſe and prettineſs in theſe lines?—I wiſh this modeſt young man, of real abilities, had fixed on ſomebody who could have returned his honeſt paſſion.

I have ſpent an agreeable day with my married friends. Brightley is actually gone a journey, the time of his return is at hand, and I find he has written to Mr. Rowe, but he did not ſpeak explicitly of the contents; only ſaid, if you ſhould come together at laſt, Miſs Barlowe!—I have a notion there is a rupture between him and Nancy. O, Mr. Rowe, I replied, do not be acceſſary in holding out to me an *ignus fatuus* that hath already ſeduced my wandering feet far from the paths of peace, which, thank heaven, I have now recovered;

recovered ;—but forgive my petulance—I am convinced of your honour, but a burnt child, you know—they both ſmil'd, and we dropp'd it.

Sure, my Eliza, I may not give up all hopes of poor Jack, if he be gone to India, it may be ſome time yet before I can hear from him.—White-handed, celeſtial Hope, I will cheriſh thee!—That my Eliza may have every conſolatory comfort in her preſent ſituation, prays

Her moſt obedient,

And ever grateful,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER XLVII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

THE laſt fortnight, my deareſt friend, having produced nothing, I have been ſilent; for why ſhould I peſter you with ſuch little incidents as even a maſterly hand could not render intereſting? and why ſhould I affront your ſuperior underſtanding with trite moral reflections on the infelicities of old age, or deplore the anxieties annexed to filial piety, when I know that your happineſs is not to be found out of the path of duty? People who love the parade of virtue may accept ſuch offerings, but my Eliza is above them.

I was

I was ſent for yeſterday to ſpend the whole day, a very common thing, with my kind neighbours—kind they are—intentionally ſo—but time only can diſcover how far they judge aright. About an hour before dinner Mr. Rowe went out at a back door, and introduced no other than my old tormentor. Mrs. Rowe, ſeeing me riſe with a little reſentment in my look, ſaid, in a whiſpering voice, don't be angry, my dear, ſit down; are we not your real friends?—I ſat down—he came near me, as did Mr. Rowe, and taking my hand, ſaid, my dear Miſs Barlowe, excuſe me and my wife—we knew of Brightley's coming—we are converts to what we think his ſincere repentance, and we jointly intreat the favour of your company for the remainder of the day together with him. I gave a reluctant half conſent—dinner was ſerved—Brightley was full of his aſſiduities.

Alas,

Alas, my dear, with how much facility could I ſlide back to the time when I was wont to liſten to his words——words, "ſofter than the vernal breezes;" but I ſteeled my heart, and gave him not the leaſt opportunity of ſaying one tender thing. I took my leave as early as poſſible, abſolutely forbid his going with me, and after I got home, reſolved, if I could avoid Mr. and Mrs. Rowe's diſpleaſure by ſo doing, to cut myſelf off from the pleaſure of their company, rather than riſk ſeeing him again.—I had a reſtleſs and unquiet night —buſy memory officiouſly preſented the gaudy ſcenes which uſed to dazzle my fond eyes.—One moment I was ready to think he had not been ſo much to blame —the next, his preſent and certain engagements with another ſtarted before my imagination, and I determined to baniſh his idea.

To-day

To-day I am more compoſed, and deſign to apply myſelf cloſe to the needle, to omit ſeeing either of my officious, well-meaning friends; in ſhort, to take every method to keep out this ever-intruding foe.—What can he mean! Is it not an uncontrovertible fact, that he has long and regularly paid his addreſſes to Miſs Fanſhaw? Did not Mr. Rowe tell me at firſt their affair went on? Dear me! I am bewildered, and would leave this houſe directly, if I knew where to go—But I will tear myſelf from the ſubject; and here comes the guileleſs Clarkſon, ſo adieu, my dear Eliza, till by and by.

I will now, my dear, cloſe this epiſtle. I have been liſtening to Mr. Clarkſon while he related a pathetic ſtory in real life, and within the circle of his own acquaintance—it has carried me out of myſelf.—I would give it you, but I reſted

ſo

ſo ill that writing is really painful. So, my deareſt Eliza, permit your Maria only to add that ſhe is,

With true affection,

Yours,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

BRIGHTLEY has been here three times, my dear, but I was inflexible, and not to be ſeen. Mrs. Walford begins to pity him, is ſure he loves me, and all that.—He left a letter with her, which I refuſed to open.

I did not go near Mr. Rowe's, my dear Eliza, for ſeveral days after the date of my laſt;—they had an inundation of company—but taking notice at length that I did not come, they both viſited me here, and taking each an hand, conjured me to acquit them of the ſhadow of a capa-

a capability of aiding to deceive. I was aſhamed of their condeſcenſion, and anſwered, my dear Sir and Madam, I do, I do indeed acquit you of ſuch an intention; it is not in the power of either, I moſt ſincerely believe, to join in ruining the peace of a poor girl, to whom you have opened the arms of friendſhip; but knowing, as I do, the conſummate art of Mr. Brightley, and ſuffering, as I have done, can you blame me for ſeeking to avoid a relapſe that would be fatal. They both aſſured me, that they thought he moſt ardently loved me. He had cleared up his former conduct, Mr. Rowe ſaid, ſo much to his ſatisfaction, that if it was his own ſiſter, he would adviſe her, as he did me, to hear him.

I was perfectly diſtreſſed, my dear— told them I would wait on them in the afternoon, and in the mean time begged

their moſt candid thoughts, for I would not offend them for the world.

And then, my friend—do not blame my weakneſs, I opened his letter—this is it:

MADAM,

Such is my awe of you, and ſo great a ſenſe have I of the ſeeming baſeneſs of my paſt behaviour, that it is impoſſible for any words to expreſs my ideas; will you, can you believe I have not had a moment's reſt ſince I forced myſelf into your preſence? Your charming image, ſo expreſſive of injured innocence, has never one moment been abſent from my imagination. For heaven's ſake permit me one ſhort interview, give me an opportunity, at leaſt, to wipe off part of the odium that invellops my character; let

let not that juſtice you do to every one be with-held from a man you once favoured with a preference, and who is, with the deepeſt contrition,

Your devoted admirer,

W. Brightley.

What can I do, my dear, beſet on every ſide; is there imminent danger in liſtening once more? Mr. and Mrs. Rowe are good people, and my real friends—perhaps—but I will not tread again the roſy path, ſo replete with thorns, I think indeed that I will not.—But I have promiſed to wait on theſe folks, and the reſult of this viſit ſhall fill up the remaining paper.

I am returned, Eliza, in a ſtate of mind I can hardly delineate.—On one

hand, in my imagination, ſtands Brightley, ſuch as when he firſt captivated my young heart, enticing me to follow him through the delightful labyrinths I firſt trod with him.—On the other hand, ſtands the haughty and opulent daughter of Mr. Fanſhaw, claiming his prior vows, and threatening vengeance on his devoted head; your poor Maria again forſaken and again broken-hearted; and, to complete the ſad picture, Eliza diſpleaſed, and ready to deſpiſe the imbecility of the girl whom her wiſdom had forewarned, and her tenderneſs conjured to ſhun his inſidious wiles.

My dear Eliza will readily ſuppoſe that he was the ſubject of our converſation at Mr. Rowe's; indeed he was, and it appears to be Mr. Rowe's fixed belief, that he has the moſt ſerious and honourable intentions of once more tender-

ing

ing his hand to your Maria's acceptance.

I aſked him if it was reaſonable to imagine that Miſs Fanſhaw, violent as ſhe was before, after a ſeries of attentions from him, and after the whole world of their acquaintance had given them to each other——Is it, I ſaid, to be ſuppoſed ſhe would relinquiſh Brightley, or that he dared on many accounts to make me ſuch an offer, though his inclination (which I very much doubted) leaned ever ſo much toward me?

Why; Mr. Rowe replied, that he believed that very violence of temper had a good deal eſtranged Brightley's affections from her; and as to daring, having nobody to fear (for he did not pay much deference to his mother) he ſaw no obſtacles of that ſort, and Brightley had, as

he told me before, a good deal cleared up his conduct, the particulars of which he was not at liberty to mention.

And ſo, my dear, I have given a kind of conſent to ſee him again—if he has not been ſo much to blame—if he is ſincere—If his engagements to Miſs Fanſhaw are not binding—why, I ſay, if all theſe ifs ſhould be in my favour, your Maria will forget her paſt ſufferings; but her right hand muſt forget her cunning when ſhe fails to ſubſcribe

Your obliged and grateful,

M. BARLOWE.

LETTER XLIX.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I DID not tell my dear Eliza that I choſe to ſee Mr. Brightley firſt in the company of my good friends, though we plann'd it ſo; and ſoon after my laſt we met there; happily, company came in, and prevented any particular talk; but I could eaſily perceive with what facility my heart could liſten to the well-known ſound of his voice.

After the aſſent I had given, there was no refuſing his attendance at Mrs. Walford's, and then what a ſcene followed—with what ſolemnity did he invoke an

higher power to bear witneſs that he had never known one heart-felt joy ſince he had abandoned me.

I told him, I believed duplicity was not an acquiſition that brought much ſelf-complacency; that I did not ſee, for my part, how he propoſed to recover the path that would lead to it; that if I was inclined to accept his offered vows once more, would not another, with juſt reaſon, by her upbraidings, poiſon his enjoyments.

No, no, he ſaid, he had never, he could never wrong another woman as he had done me; he ſhould wrong her indeed ſhould he perſevere with a heart devotedly mine; in ſhort Eliza (for he ſtaid a long while) he had the power to whiten over the moſt ſable part of his conduct in ſuch a manner, that he almoſt made

made a triumphal entry into the weak citadel of your poor Maria's heart. When I inſiſted on his going, with a promiſe, that if on enquiry I could really find he had abſolutely and honourably withdrawn his addreſſes from Miſs Fanſhaw, why then I would give him my company—never did man ſeem more delighted—he dropped on his knees, ſaid I was an angel of forgiveneſs, that would conduct him to a heaven which his own folly had for a long time excluded him from the hope of!—But what did he not ſay.—And now, my dear, ſhall I confeſs, that love has again arched a tottering throne in my boſom, ſurrounded by doubts and fears. The remainder of the night, or rather morning, which I ſpent in bed, only ſhort ſnatches of troubled ſleep, which neither refreſhed or compoſed me, ſupplied the place of thoſe balſamic

ſlumbers which a kind Providence hath of late allotted me.

I almoſt dread my Eliza's next letter; but you will not, like the event-judging world, condemn

Your moſt affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER L.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

I WRITE, becauſe my ſweet Maria requeſts me ſo to do; otherwiſe I ſhould have waited a little longer, not (if the event is contrary to my wiſhes) to blame, but in hopes (though I own contrary to my expectations) of congratulating you on your proſpects. Be it as it will, ſure my Maria has no reaſon to dread a letter from her ever faithful friend; who, ſhe knows, has candour enough to place herſelf in Maria's very ſituation when ſhe paſſes her judgment; that ſhe will not forget her early age, her conſtitutional ſoftneſs, in-

deed she will enter into her very feelings, or she would have no claim to the endearing titles of friend, sister, and monitress; delightful appellations which Maria hath given to

Her affectionate,

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER LI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

A MONTH on downy wings hath flown away ſince I had my Eliza's ſhort but balmy letter; almoſt every day has been ſpent with Brightley, or if he has been abſent he has been the agreeable theme of our converſation. Though I own, my dear, I can't help feeling a little, and but a very little of that corroding paſſion called jealouſy; it is a dreadful inmate to be ſure, but as my affection for Brightley has increaſed equal to its firſt ardour, I find myſelf extremely ſuſceptible of it,

and

and am often ready to cry out with the charming Stella,

O ſhield me from his rage, celeſtial powers,
This tyrant that embitters all my hours, &c.

Are not theſe lines particularly applicable to me? But not to give you cauſe to think I have not the ſhadow of a reaſon, I have thought Brightley has ſometimes been a little embarraſſed when I have aſked him where he was at ſuch and ſuch a time—and then he has found the way to quiet my ſuſpicions in a moment, by anſwering, that ſure he told me he had an engagement here or there; when, upon my word, I remember nothing of it. You will ſay this is an inconſiſtent and contardictory letter; for how, if I harbour ſuch ſuſpicions, can the time have fled on wings of down?—Why, my dear, it is more than a month ſince I have written to you, and theſe baleful weeds have ſprung in my mind but very lately.—

But

But he comes, and in a moment diſſipates my fears; he comes with eyes, if there be any expreſſion of truth in them, replete with love. So adieu, my dear Eliza, for the preſent.

Now I return to you—he came and found me buſily employed, for I only quitted my pen for the needle; he ſnatched the work from my hand, and ſaid, why do you work ſo cloſe? I replied, to earn my bread—do you know that I have ſubſiſted ſometime by the dexterity of my fingers. Forbear, ſaid he, to wound me, I have had ſelf-reproach ſufficient; let my ſweet Maria look only forward—you ſhall never touch this curſed work again. Indeed but I muſt finiſh it, but ſhall lay it aſide for this time. We then, my dear Eliza, accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Rowe in their carriage to town, and to the playhouſe (for the theatres are not yet ſhut) where

we

we ſaw the Diſtreſt Mother inimitably performed by ſome of the capital actors. Indeed London puts on another aſpect than it wore on my firſt ſeeing it—the houſe was crouded—I never at one view ſaw ſo many brilliant people—we ſat in the pit, I have no dreſs for a more conſpicuous ſtation; that white ſatin (which was bought for an event which I am again encouraged to look towards) with a few ſuitable embelliſhments, conſtitutes the laſt habit I ſhall wear in remembrance of my dear father; but what are habits, his parental goodneſs is indelibly graven elſewhere!

We returned after the play, the road from hence being ſecured by watchmen from danger; we ſup'd with our friends, and had much agreable converſation. Mr. Rowe ſaid, Brightley, if you can prevail on Miſs Barlowe to overlook all your

paſt

paſt lapſes, I don't ſee why you need make it long before you place her in a ſituation more worthy of her—Mrs. Rowe and I were thinking to beg the favour of her company till then, as we expect a ſummons ſoon to meet my wife's mother at Bath. Brightley anſwered, ſuch was my goodneſs, that he believed I had really forgiven him, and he hoped farther, from my generoſity, that a ſhort day would be on my part aſſented to; he ſaid ſome buſineſs he had to tranſact with his mother in regard to his ſiſter's fortune, which though of age, ſhe had not received, and which would in a little time now be ſettled, had prevented his coming to the point long ſince, as he wiſhed to have no plague of buſineſs in the infancy of ſuch a ſtate of felicity. I thanked Mr. and Mrs. Rowe for their kind intentions of receiving me as their viſitor, ſaid I could continue with much ſatisfaction longer at

Mrs.

Mrs. Walford's, but made no anſwer to Mr. Brightley's harangue, which you know was conſent ſufficient. We parted late—I ſlept ſweetly—" Hope, love, and joy, fair pleaſure's ſmiling train, danc'd round my heart." But I did not yield to ſleep's ſoft preſſure, till I had poured out my thankſgivings to that Being who thus liberally diſpenſes the ingredients in my hitherto bitter cup, and beſought him ſtill to give me only good—and my Eliza will believe, that ſhe is always remembered in the imperfect prayers of her

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER LII.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

I HAVE a piece of news to communicate to my dear Maria, that will in the main be agreeable to her. You muſt know a young attorney with whom I have ſome acquaintance, and who does buſineſs both for Mr. Freeland and Mr. Blanchard, called on me lately, and after chatting about my affairs, aſked me where Miſs Barlow was. I was a little ſurprized at the queſtion, as I was not aware that he knew Maria was my boſom friend; but I anſwered, without heſitation, that you was very near London, with a perſon who had lived

lived with your father, and I hoped well and happy, as a letter from you very lately gave me to underſtand. I am glad of it, replied the young gentleman, Mr. Freeland treated her in an unworthy manner, for he charged her with breaking off the match between his daughter and young Blanchard; but the whole affair is now diſcloſed—for that favourite maid of Miſs Freeland's has lately fallen into an ill ſtate of health, and obliged to leave her ſervice, but before ſhe went, being touched with remorſe, ſhe told her maſter, that ſhe was the perſon, and not poor dear Miſs Barlowe, that told Mr. Blanchard his daughter was given to drink; adding, that ſhe uſed to ſupply Miſs Freeland with liquor privately, and that ſhe drank ſuch a deal of ſtrong ſtuff every day, that if he did not take care of her ſhe would ſoon kill herſelf. The poor old gentleman, continued he, was thunderſtruck,

and

and now keeps a good look-out. I have heard him expreſs much concern for the manner in which he treated Miſs Barlowe, and I really believe he will endeavour to make her ſome reparation by a handſome preſent or ſomething of that ſort. I told him that I hoped my friend would be ſoon happily ſettled, that it would be reparation enough to have your character cleared, which till then had been unſullied. He anſwered, he was rejoiced to hear you was likely to be rewarded according to your merit, for by every thing he had heard, you was one of the moſt deſerving of your ſex. I will not tell my Maria with what pleaſure I devoured her praiſes, her own heart is ſo reſponſive to mine there is no need of it.

How fit are you for that proſperity which ſeems to await you, when you ſo devoutly pour out the thankſgivings of

your pure heart to the great firſt Cauſe. Proſperity, my dear, I really believe, is harder to bear properly than adverſity; it throws open every avenue for diſſipation to enter and unhinge the mind. You have borne the one ſo nobly, that I have no doubt but the other will become you equally.

May the charming groupe, which you ſay now dance around your heart, ſtill accompany you; the two latter will, ſometimes unavoidably, become fugitives as to ſublunary things; but the firſt, I truſt, will never forſake you till ſwallowed up in immutable and bliſsful certainty. In all my oriſons, Maria Barlowe is undivided from her

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

YOUR letter, my dear Eliza, hath been unanſwered longer than it ought to have been: I can but rejoice at regaining a place in Mr. Freeland's eſteem, becauſe I believe him to be a good man; I have no reſentment againſt him, it is ſwallowed up in pity for a poor man who had treaſured up his ſoul in ſo unmeriting a child. As for the poor Suſan, I wiſh her return to health may not cauſe her to forego the honeſty ſhe has ſhewn on this occaſion.—I will be revenged on her by wiſhing her a ſound body and a good mind.

So taken up as I have been, and ſtill am with the Lord of my wiſhes, I have not lately mentioned the worthy Clarkſon, who deſerves to be always remembered by me. He has left his lodging in this neighbourhood in ſomewhat better health—but, my dear, I too much fear in a leſs tranquil ſtate of mind than when he came to it.—He has been made acquainted with my preſent engagements; he deſired to take leave of me—I received him with the greateſt pleaſure—I thanked him with my whole heart for his many civilities—told him his friendſhip was an acquiſition, and that my preſent proſpects (bright as they were) did not ſo fully ſatisfy my encroaching ſpirit, but I wiſhed ſtill to retain it.

He anſwered, that if his prayers could avail, not one cloud would ariſe to overſhadow them. No, Miſs Barlowe, continued

tinued he, far be any ſelfiſh motives from a man who aſpired to be more than your friend—may your felicity be permanent—you aſk what is not in my power to with-hold, for in all ſituations and viciſſitudes my heart will be warmed with your charming idea. Judge then if the offer of your friendſhip will not be accepted with gratitude, and repaid with intereſt.

Our parting was ſolemn—I was forward to receive his embrace, and almoſt ready to return it. God bleſs you, Mr. Clarkſon, ſaid I, holding out my hand, which he haſtily kiſſed, and hurried from me to hide the burſting tear.

My heart, my dear, is much ſoftened by this young man—I could never love him, I am ſure; but if I did not hope he would ſoon ſurmount this attachment for

me, it would be a great alloy to my happineſs; but he will—Mr. Clarkſon's reaſon will get the better of his paſſion. But let me find a more pleaſing theme—And now, my dear Eliza, I once more give way to the delightful hope that it will ſoon be in my power to evince my gratitude to you by more ſubſtantial tokens than mere words. Mr. Brightley's fortune is certainly pretty affluent, and though I ſhall bring him none, yet I will contrive, by keeping much within the bounds, which I know his liberality will preſcribe to his wife, to be of ſervice, or rather to leſſen the debt I owe my deareſt friend.—Public diverſions I ſhall ſeldom frequent, unleſs deſired and accompanied by him.——To keep his heart, I ſhall pay attention to dreſs, but the leaſt expenſive is often the moſt becoming, and what a ſaving may be made in that article.—Cards! if I can help it,

I ſhall

I ſhall ſeldom play, ſo no money will fly that way.—My domeſtics ſhall be few; and, if poſſible, conſcientious, and afraid to make waſte from principle.

Sure, Eliza, I ſhall never forget when I get upon an eminence that I have ſojourned in the vale of misfortune—But I am called by Mr. Brightley to take a walk.

I am returned, and an enchanting walk it has been—ſo polite, ſo tender, ſo every thing is Brightley.

Mr. and Mrs. Rowe have received the ſummons he mentioned, to meet Mrs. Brooks, her mother, at Bath; the day after to-morrow they ſet out.—They will be abſent three or four weeks, and as ſoon as they return, I ſhall be, my dear Eliza—(O heavens is it poſſible!) the wife of

the only man I ever yet regarded with a preference.—To-morrow we go out on a little party—they take me in their carriage to where Mr. Brightley is to meet us with his phaeton; we ſhall not return in the ſame manner we ſet out.

Now, my dear Eliza, I believe I am, at this preſent writing, as happy as a human creature generally is, or ought to be—there are ſome concomitants, that if added, would make my cup of felicity ready to run over. If my dear brother and my dear friend were of this party, might it not be too full and delicious?—Let me be thankful for what I have.—I am too late for the poſt, ſo a word or two more in the morning.

And a lovely morning it is, my dear Eliza—I am riſen with the ſun—"Who gilds all objects, but he alters none."

 Though

Though I am apt to believe this bright luminary, glorious as he is, would not have the ſole power to irradiate each ſurrounding object, had not my feelings been tuned to joy—for "the noontide ſun is dark, and muſic diſcord when the heart is low."—As it is, my dear, what a beautiful azure tinges yon wide expanſe! —What a vivifying green overſpreads the ground!—How ſalutary and refreſhing the morning breezes that wanton in the trees!—With what a ſweet complacency does each diminutive flower raiſe its fragrant head!—How melodious the early chirpings of the little birds that flit about —though the ſuperior harmoniſts of the grove chaunt not in this crowded village!

I am arrayed, in conformity to theſe gay ideas, in a gown of azure—and have bid adieu, I hope, for a long time, to habiliments of ſable.

But let me forbear—perhaps enlarged as my Eliza's powers of friendſhip are, this epiſtle may arrive at an unſeaſonable hour, when ſhe is employed in a manner that may give the moſt innocent vivacity the appearance of a levity, of which her Maria's ſympathizing hear is incapable.—That thought reſtrains my pen, which, at this moment, ſeems dipped in all the colours of the rainbow.

My friends wait for me—ſo I will only ſay, adieu, my beloved Eliza, and believe I can never be aught but

Your grateful and affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER LIV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

AH, my dear Eliza! "where now are all my flattering dreams of joy?"

Though ſorrow is a fruitful ſubject, yet the few words on the top of this is all I have been able to write for the laſt three days.—How different the concluſion of my laſt!—But I will try at particulars.

With what ſenſations I went into Mr. Rowe's carriage I have already told you.—My friends were delighted with that

air of content and vivacity which gave an unuſual animation to my countenance. We proceeded, chatting with great mirth and ſpirit, till we came within view of the houſe where Brightley was to meet us, and where a ſlight dinner had been beſpoke. You command the houſe a conſiderable way from it. Mr. Rowe looked out, and ſaid Brightley has been very punctual—I think that is his chaiſe at the door—we both looked, and were convinced it was—the horſes did not gallop, but moved in the ſame way they had done. I involuntarily kept looking out, as did Mrs. Rowe at the other window, and he through the back-glaſs; when, ſtrange to us! Mr. Brightley appeared at the door of the houſe: a lady followed him whom he obſequiouſly handed into his chaiſe.—Mr. Rowe ſaid, what the deuce is Brightley going?—As I am alive he has got Miſs Fanſhaw!—They both looked

looked at me—I ſuppoſe I was pale, but ſomehow ſuſpended—when we ſaw the phaeton move a little way towards us, and plainly diſcovered what was death to me, viz. that it was the identical lady. The hopes of meeting them kept me alive for a moment; but when I ſaw him look at Mr. Rowe's coach, which was now very near, and ſaw him whiſk into a road that turned to the right, and drive triumphantly off, I fell ſenſeleſs from the ſeat.—I awaked to miſery ſoon after we reached the houſe—that fatal houſe—that my fooliſh fond heart had whiſpered would be a temporary paradiſe.

Every ſoothing method did my worthy friends take to reſtore me—the tender aſſiduities of a brother and ſiſter can only give an idea of their kindneſs—but, alas, my dear, I was not to be comforted. —I continued weak, pale, and dejected

for two hours, and every now and then run to the windows with a frantic air, as though I expected Brightley to return.—Mr. Rowe beſought me to be compoſed—ſaid that perhaps, though appearances were ſo much againſt him, he might have ſomething to ſay.—I could make no anſwer—and not one friendly tear would eaſe my burſting hear—at laſt, finding me no better, they were ſo kind as to bring me home. Poor Mrs. Walford was really frightened at the ſurpriſing alteration in my looks in ſo ſhort a ſpace. My friends ſaid I had been ill; and thought it prudent to ſay nothing to her about Brightley. But, my dear, I told her at once that my indiſpoſition proceeded from him alone—I want no concealments.—Well, Mr. and Mrs. Rowe ſtaid, when I deſired not to detain them longer, as I knew they had a journey in hand.—I ſaid I would lie down.—They

both assured they would see me in the morning, and how much they were interested in my afflictions, their sympathizing looks sufficiently testified.

I did not lie down—but the moment I was alone threw myself on my knees, imploring the Almighty to save me from distraction.

Would you believe it; in a few minutes I heard Brightley below enquiring for me. I sat down in a chair a moment, to recover steadiness of limbs sufficient to bear me to him. On entering the room I made him a low curtsy; he, with consummate assurance, took my hand, and said, why this ceremony, my sweet girl? Heavens, what is the matter! How ill you look! I answered with great solemnity, Mr. Brightley, I am not ashamed to confess that I am, and have been

been extremely indiſpoſed, nor that it is occaſioned by ſeeing you with the perſon, and in the manner in which I ſaw you, juſt at that critical time when I expected to meet you full of love and truth; and after a ſeries of conduct, on your part, that had laid all my doubts aſleep—it is but a poor triumph, Mr. Brightley, after all, and on reflection will but ill compenſate the wanton pains you have taken to deceive me.

I know not how much I ſhould have run on in this ſtrain, had he not ſaid, according to the appearance of things you have too much juſtice on your ſide, but I can fully convince you that the whole affair was accidental, and on my part unavoidable; and then he run on with a confuſed jargon of meeting Mr. Fanſhaw and his daughter—that he had called at the houſe to tell the people that they

ſhould

ſhould be ſure to inform the company, that an unexpected affair would detain him from waiting on them till two hours after the time fixed, that he had been exact to that time, as I might ſee by his being here ſo ſoon after we returned. In ſhort, my dear, ſuch a heap of extenuations, that ill as I was I could not attend to, and if I had been ever ſo clear, I ſhould not have regarded. I told him I was ſo extremely low and poorly, that I could not juſt then hold any more diſcourſe with him; if he had any juſt and real excuſes to make, Mr. and Mrs. Rowe would liſten to him with all the candour he could expect, but I muſt bid him a good night; and then, Eliza, your poor Maria ſought conſolation from her pillow, but the cruel Brightley had ſtrewn it ſo thick with pointed thorns, that it would yield none. God of his infinite mercy ſhield me from ſuch another night!

To

To be plunged from ſuch a height of happineſs ſo ſuddenly, was almoſt too much for my reaſon to ſupport; the whole night was one dreadful ſcene not entirely free from delirium I believe, for my brain ſeemed burning, and now and then ſparks of fire ſeemed to iſſue from my eye-balls. The chaiſe, the perfidious Brightley, the haughty and inſulting Miſs Fanſhaw, (whoſe wealth has deſtroyed my peace) were for ever preſent to my imagination, in this manner wore out the diſmal night. I got up at the wonted hour, thinking any company better than my own—my good friends came to ſee me—they feared I was in a high fever; they told me Brightley had been with them, and he accounted for his actions in this manner:—that he was ſetting out rather earlier than the time appointed; that juſt as he got off the ſtones, he ſaw a little croud about a carriage, in which a horſe had dropped

dead

dead ſuddenly; that on coming up he found the people in it were Mr. Fanſhaw and his daughter, they had alighted without any hurt to themſelves; that Mr. Fanſhaw ſaid they were engaged to dine at ——; that he could not proceed; he aſked Brightley where he was going—He replied, to meet Company at ——; can't you take Nancy and convey her thither, and as you will paſs the houſe leave word you will wait on them an hour or two later; he ſaid he would walk home again, but was very deſirous his daughter ſhould go, as it was an indiſpenſable engagement. What could I do, ſaid Brightley, when Nancy ſaid, ſure you are too gallant not to ſuccour a damſel in diſtreſs. Such, added Mr. Rowe, is the plauſible ſtory he tells. I ſhook my head.—Why really, Miſs Barlowe, I have not much faith in it, and ſo I told him, and that it had like to have been fatal to you. He was diſpleaſed

with

with my incredulity, and a warm altercation enſued; I know at preſent it will add to your diſtreſs, but I can't help thinking that Brightley has never broke off with Nancy Fanſhaw at all, for I know her ſpirit ſo well, that if they had been on ill terms, ſhe would have bid him drive to the devil by himſelf, for we ſhould not deign to accept of any of his favours.—Mrs. Rowe ſaid Mr. Brightley's conduct was ſo very ambiguous, that ſhe could form no judgment about it. I replied, that I hoped Providence (on which I had always ſtedfaſtly relied) would ſo far ſtrengthen me that I ſhould not fall a victim to his inhumanity, that (taking in all circumſtances) few people, I believed, had been treated with ſuch wanton barbarity.—That ſinking as I was with complicated diſtreſs, I wanted that vigour of mind which ſhould make me ſo far deſpiſe him as to produce an inference, for I could not

not but ſay (cruelly as he had acted) yet at preſent I loved him with fervency.—This, I added, was an humility bordering on weakneſs—but I was a bruiſed reed, and very near broken, and I wept abundantly; they could not refrain, eſpecially Mrs. Rowe, from weeping alſo. They were ſo very kind as to offer to poſtpone their journey, if it would do me either ſervice or pleaſure; but I would not hear of it. I replied, that next to the Supreme Being, my heart's eaſe was in Brightley's hands; that perhaps in a few days he might be civil enough to reſtore part of it to me. They deſired I would uſe their houſe or garden, if I could find any amuſement in it, entirely at my pleaſure, and enjoined me to write, which I promiſed to do as ſoon as I ſhould be able; and wiſhing them all the happineſs they ſo juſtly merited, bid them farewell.

When

When they were gone, my dear Eliza, a more copious ſhower of tears reſtored me to a calm and tranquil ſtate of ſorrow. I once more had recourſe to devotion; alas! what do thoſe poor wretches do, who cannot in diſtreſs fly to the inexpreſſible comforts of religion? But you are under it benign influence——ſo enough.

I am ſtill, my dear, very unable to eat or ſleep; theſe few days of miſery have worn me to a ſhadow; writing to you (next to the above-mentioned reſource) has been my only conſolation. I find I have loſt the poſt, ſo ſhall add a little more.

Brightley called here yeſterday, and ſeemed very much alarmed (Mrs. Walford ſays) at my great indiſpoſition—ſhe told him I was ſleeping, ſo the gentleman purpoſed

purpoſed to call again. Till I am better I cannot get out of his way, but the moment I am in a capacity of ſo doing I will. Ah! my dear, how fondly did I prate to you of the manner in which I would ſpend my time and diſtribute my abundance. How did I plume myſelf, and boaſt that my pen was dipped in all the colours of the gaudy Iris! No, this black and ſable ink is only proper to ſcribble my ſad tale, or ſign the name of

Your afflicted, but

ever affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER LV.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

IF I had not had ſuch experience of the perfidy of man, I ſhould hardly think it poſſible, my deareſt Maria, for nature to produce ſo deſpicable a wretch as Brightley. I ſhould have been apt to conclude, that young as you ſtill are, and ſtrongly prejudiced in favour of your firſt attachment, that ſelf-deception might conſtrue his blandiſhments too much in your own favour; this would have been the caſe of nine out of ten, amongſt the young and the lovefick. But when I reflect on your known and tried prudence,

on his open manner of renewing his ſuit, with the ſanction of Mr. and Mrs. Rowe, on his almoſt fixing the very day, I am ready to execrate the monſter, and pitying you, as I do with my whole ſoul; yet indignation is the predominant paſſion—but I will not call down curſes on his devoted head;—that heaven whom he mocks will avenge you. But do not abandon yourſelf, my dear, give not way, I conjure you, to deſpondence, fortune will in time be weary of perſecuting you; or, to ſpeak more conformable to our profeſſion, that juſt and equal God whom you worſhip, will reward your patience even here. You are tried in the furnace of affliction, and will come out, my dear, the fineſt gold.

And now what hinders you from coming and pouring all your ſorrows into my ſympathiſing boſom.

You

You have obeyed an impulſe, and it has not been productive of that good which we flatter ourſelves thoſe intelligences prognoſticate. The name of the inſinuating, vain, cruel, diſſembling, fooliſh fellow, will not invade you in theſe peaceful regions. You did juſtice to the friendſhip I have avowed, when you ſuppoſed the letter ſo expreſſive of a jocund heart would gladden me, however painful my own avocations at the time of receiving it might be.

For indeed, Maria, had it arrived at the moſt diſtreſsful juncture, I muſt have taſted your joy, and for a moment ſuſpended my own concerns. There was no levity in your chearfulneſs, you were ſtill animated with grateful piety, and your faithful Eliza the pleaſure of thinking you would ſupport proſperity, were it your lot, with no leſs propriety than you

have done adverſity. Your very intentions of ſerving me, which I as firmly believe as though I was to read them in your guileleſs heart, weigh equally in the ſcale of my eſtimation with large donations. Think not of me, my dear, in that particular, by lopping off all artificial wants I have every thing in abundance; an ocean of wealth could not renew my mother's age, or reſtore her vigour and intellectual powers; ſhe has all ſhe has a capacity to enjoy. Pray come here, Maria, your mind will gradually heal when you are with me, and corporal health will ſoon follow. Such a child of nature cannot long be inſenſible to her charms.—Your eye will catch pleaſure, while it meaſures the ſurrounding landſcape of ruſſet lawns and grey fallows, on which ſtray the nibbling flocks; the mountains too, which ſeem to ſupport the labouring clouds, add ſublimity to

the charming ſcene; you will ſee the meadows pied with daiſies, the noble river and the ſhallow brook. Our cot is adorned with the jaſſimine and the honey-ſuckle, the creeping ivy covers the crazy walls, and

> The lark ſhall come, in ſpite of ſorrow,
> And at your window bid good-morrow.

The beneficial cow ſhall yield you a ſalutary beverage; and then I have a race of poultry ſufficiently numerous to ſatisfy people more carnivorous than we are. I ſhall impatiently expect another letter from you; in the mean time, my dear, I commend you to that heaven which will aſſuredly pity and calm your troubled ſpirit. I am, as always, my dear Maria's

Unalterable and

moſt affectionate,

E. HARWOOD.

LETTER LVI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I AM, my dear Eliza, thank heaven, better than when I laſt wrote to you.—Indeed, my mind and heart have undergone ſuch a change!—a change unaccountable, and almoſt miraculous!—I ſay unaccountable, but I will try to account for it.

I told you Brightley had called here, and expreſſed the moſt tender concern for my health—weak and abject fool as I was, it ſoothed me—but I was reſolved to

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avoid him—conſcious of his power, tho' convinced of his diſſimulation.

You know a long while ago, after I could not eſteem him, I continued to love—and this ſecond time he had ſo twined himſelf about my heart, that I verily thought it could not be diſentangled without tearing in pieces. The baſe intruder could not get at me for ſome days——but a few evenings ſince, when I little ſuſpected, he was hereabouts, and my kind hoſteſs gone out, was trying to read a good book, when he ruſhed into the room where I was ſitting alone. I made an effort to leave him, but weak and emaciated as I am a hair would detain me. With ſhameleſs effrontery, he aſked, if he was infectious? I replied yes—that I would rather ruſh into a peſtilential chamber, into a rapid flood, or ſcorching fire, than ſtay one moment

moment in his preſence, had I but an option. He ſeemed to ſmile at this tragedy rant—deſired I would hear what he had to ſay, and then diſhed-up again the ſtory he had told Mr. and Mrs. Rowe.—I looked at him ſteadily while he was talking; and, would you believe it, Eliza, my wayward heart was like to incline again towards him.—Well, full an hour was paſſed in recrimination and extenuations on his ſide, till my ſpirits began to be exhauſted.—At laſt, I ſaid, Mr. Brightley, as vanity, I ſincerely believe, is the prime motive that cauſes you to purſue and perſecute me in this manner, one would think it was now fully gratified, ſince I own, and every body knows, you have been the mighty and ſole lord of my affections. Vanity!—he repeated, and reddened. Yes, vanity, ſaid I.—Poor and deſtitute as I am, I concieve there is a ſort of men in the

world to whom it is the higheſt gratification to have the world know that a young girl is in love with them. As you probably are one of thoſe, (for no other motive can be aſſigned) I hope Providence will empower me to look down upon you.—Yes, Sir, notwithſtanding the difference in exteriors—you wealthy and greatly connected—I indigent, without parents—and without a home—I feel a conſcious ſuperiority of mind—a ſincere and ardent paſſion towards what I judged an object every way worthy, I avowed openly—for I hate every ſpecies of diſſimulation. Truth, were I a Pagan, ſhould be my goddeſs! And if veracity, and a conduct without guile can exalt that perſon above one whoſe actions have been diametrically oppoſite in every particular, conſequently I ſhall look down upon you.

This

This long ſpeech, my dear Eliza, was not uttered without difficulty, as my breath is ſhort and my voice tremulous. He did not look pleaſed, but when I had done ſpeaking, ſaid, with a viſible ſneer, you exhauſt yourſelf too much, Maria—you will faint *again*, I fear—where is the ſmelling-bottle?

Would you believe the inſtantaneous effect this ſpeech had upon me—he was deformed all over in a moment—the baſeneſs of a heart that could inſult a creature whom he had brought ſo low, ſtruck ſo forcibly, that words cannot deſcribe the calm indignation with which I bid him begone, for I was diſpoſed to retire; that as I flattered myſelf I ſhould have a good night's reſt (for which I ſhould have gratitude enough to thank him) I would take his advice, and exhauſt myſelf no more—ſo taking up the candle, I left the

gentleman to make his own comments. —He went away immediately.—After thanking the Almighty for a dawn of tranquillity, I went to bed and ſlept ſweetly. I awoke free from anxiety.—To-day I am purſuing my wonted avocations with a ſerenity of late unuſual.

What an egotiſt!—Self, ſelf, is the important theme of every ſcroll which ſalutes the hand of my dear Eliza, from her

Moſt affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER LVII.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

THE ſurprifing, but to me not unnatural turn your affairs have taken, gives me, my dear Maria, the pureſt ſatisfaction.—Perhaps to many people it may appear ſo—but really, when it is conſidered that you have an exalted mind, and very acute feelings, altogether inconſiſtent with any thing abject.—That he never before diſcovered the leaſt ſymptom of that inſulting pride, it appears to me natural enough—that contempt on your part would follow ſuch a diſcovery—and I think I can venture to preſage, that the

more you reflect on it, the greater will be your diſlike, and total indifference will be the conſequence.

But let me know, my dear, how matters go.—You ſay nothing in anſwer to my preſſing invitation; perhaps you have not got it, or rather, as I think, have not been able to attend to it.

Why do you talk of egotiſm, my dear Maria?—your letters would hardly be intereſting to me if you were not the ſubject—they have been painfully ſo many times, I confeſs—while mine have an inſipid ſameneſs conſonant to my ſtill life. —If I have given you proper advice, and have convinced you of my real affection, it is thoſe things only that can ſtamp a value on my letters—but I will try to amuſe you a little with a rural incident.

About

About a mile from me lives one of thoſe creatures (little above the animal) called country 'Squires, in a large and beautiful manſion, a perſon of amazing proweſs in the field, and a religious obſerver of the rites of the jolly god: his mother, who was one of thoſe characters one frequently meets with, thought ſhe had fully diſcharged her duty if, by her care, ſhe ſecured to him an abundant ſtock of health—had, beſides him, one daughter, who being ſent to a reputable ſchool, and mixing afterwards, as it happened, with the better ſort of people in the world, is a reſpectable woman, and has been ſome time married. His mother, I ſay, ſuperintended this young man's houſhold, and died about a year ſince, and left him at the head of ten or a dozen ſervants, among which were three females; one young and handſome, and ſo illiterate, I am informed, as to be

ſcarce able to diſtinguiſh the letters of the alphabet.

You may imagine what courſe things would take, with ſuch an animal at the head of the family; in ſhort, this poor young creature was with child, and no doubt told him ſo, but he paid no regard to the circumſtance, or was ſhe ever excuſed from doing the buſineſs of her place; the other ſervants uſed to flout her, for her bigneſs was become viſible to every one; ſhe had no friends, and might, for aught I know, be taken from the pariſh. Well, before any body expected it, ſhe cried out in the middle of the night; her fellow ſervant, with much ado, awakened the 'Squire, and told him Fanny was in labour. The devil ſhe is! anſwered the ſtrange brute; ſend for the old woman then; who arriving, produced a chopping boy. When

(ſee

(ſee the power of inſtinct over refined love in ſuch creatures!) he kiſſed the infant a thouſand times, ſwore Fan ſhould never work any more, and teſtified his parental affection by a joy ridiculous, and almoſt phrenſical.

The very next morning arrived his ſiſter, accompanied by her huſband, fraught with ſchemes of reformation in the 'Squire's family, having heard of his doings, and inſiſted on his ſending the girl about her buſineſs immediately; and if, as ſhe feared, ſhe was with child, he ſhould provide for it.

The 'Squire anſwered, with ſome civility, that he would take care of any child of his begetting, but he ſhould not part with Fan.

The

The lady was provoked, and desired to see her. He said, she could not just then; she was proceeding to search the house, when he, somewhat rudely, prevented her leaving the room, on which she called him unnatural bear.—The 'Squire then ran up stairs, brought down the new-born babe, swore she would never be the mother of such an one. This was not to be borne (for the lady is not blessed with children) and added, that the moment Fan was well enough, the parson should marry them, and baptize the boy at the same time.

The violence of Mrs. Hervey's passion (for that was her name) was too much for her constitution; her husband threatened to give the 'Squire corporal chastisement, and a dreadful scene of altercation and confusion ensued; but at last Mr. Hervey conducted his recovered lady to

their

their coach; the 'Squire bidding them farewell in the politeſt manner.

Well, my dear Maria, in a few days I was honoured with a viſit from this odd mortal; he ſaid, he had heard that I was a deviliſh ſenſible woman—that he intended to marry a young woman who was his ſervant—that ſhe had had no learning—that he begged me to come and ſee her, and would make it worth my while to teach her to read and behave like a gentlewoman. I promiſed him that I would viſit her in a few days—that I was informed ſhe was indiſpoſed at preſent, but I would certainly call on her at a convenient time. He ſeemed vaſtly grateful, and yeſterday ſent a formal invitation by a man ſervant.

I went, my dear, and found it was to be the bridal and chriſtening day. On

being ſhewn up ſtairs, I was ſtruck with the ſight of the moſt beautful creature imaginable—you know the pleaſure I take in contemplating beauty, and I muſt deſcribe her.

She is of the low, middle ſize; the ſofteſt and ſweeteſt blue eyes, a complexion reſplendently fair, a mouth to the laſt degree lovely, with teeth even and white as ivory; her hands and arms finely formed, but a little injured hy the labour ſhe has undergone, and a profuſion of the fineſt cheſnut hair. He had bought her a rich white flowered ſilk for the occaſion; but ſhe wore a cap that ſhe was accuſtomed to wear, and her redundant treſſes were artleſsly diſpoſed. Indeed, Maria, you have the advantage of this young woman in perſonal charms, becauſe your charming features glow with

with intelligence; but, except yourſelf, I never ſaw her equal!

The 'Squire was dreſſed ſmart enough —the prieſt joined their hands—and then chriſtened the little one, which the father called by his own name; it was what they call half baptized, ſo the uſual compliment of ſponſors were not requiſite.

But I will not tire you with particulars. The young woman appears to be very docile, and the 'Squire ſeems as though this event would humaniſe him. I am a frequent viſitor there, and if I can make them become rational creatures, and inſpire them with benevolence to diſtribute that great wealth of which this young man is poſſeſſed, properly, it will fully compenſate my pains.

In

In the mean time, my dear, I think this event greatly corroborates the certainty of future retribution; for here is a young creature (to ſpeak in the moſt favourable terms) without virtue, become the wife of a man of large fortune, and no doubt the man ſhe loves above all others; while my dear Maria, endowed with every virtuous, every prudent ſentiment, wiſe as a ſerpent, yet harmleſs as a dove, and adorned with true and expreſſive beauty, is buffetted about by the winds of adverſity, and has almoſt fallen a victim to the inſidious arts of a wanton villain.

I ſhould not expreſs myſelf in this manner, but that I know your faith and piety are built on a ſolid baſe, that you can look even beyond the grave, where, no doubt, all theſe, to us inexplicable things, will be clear.

I have

I have written you a longer letter than uſual, thinking it may divert you; but ſhall not add to the length of it by profeſſions which are needleſs between my dear Maria and her

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER LVIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I HAVE my dear Eliza's kind letter—when had I an unkind one? But, my dear, alluring as your ſweet habitation is, attractive as is your dear ſociety, yet I cannot think juſt yet of paying you a viſit.

Brightley has been here more than once—I wiſh not to be denied to him; and every time I find myſelf more light and diſentangled. The worthy Clarkſon, whom I have not mentioned for a long time, came the other day and drank tea; Brightley came in while he was here, the modeſt

modeſt young man would have withdrawn, but I deſired him to ſit ſtill, and as I am alive I thought the former looked at him with an eye of jealouſy. What ſtrange freaks does that little urchin play, Eliza; for I firmly believe Brightley would give any thing if I loved as well as I was wont to do, and then I ſuppoſe he would grow cold in proportion; however that be, I never ſhall. At one time his ſinging had ſuch an almoſt divine influence, that I diſolved, as it were, in extacy, and now I mortify him by ſaying I like as well to hear a blind ballad-ſinger; there can be no harm in mortifying one who has ſo ſenſibly affected me. I bid him keep away, but he has no power to do it.

I have recovered my health, and if I ever deſerved a compliment on my looks, it is now. I have written to my friends at Bath a true ſtate of my heart, and have received their congratulations

on

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on

on my freedom. Mr. Rowe adds, that he thinks verily the arch-deceiver is ſtill in high favour with Miſs Fanſhaw. With all my heart; I own, my dear, the little pride I have is fully gratified in thinking it is in the power of the poor Maria Barlowe to ſtand in competition with a perſon of her expectations; for in truth Brightley quits me now with reluctance—and, as I ſaid before, would do any thing to revive that flame he ſo unexpectedly and irrecoverably quenched by his wholeſome inſults. Your laſt is come to hand—and ſo you think the indifference I feel for him is not unnatural; upon my word, it ſeems ſo unaccountable to myſelf, that if it is not preſumptuous, I ſhould be ready to pronounce it a particular intervention of Providence, that I might not in my early youth fall a victim to hopeleſs love. Whatever be the cauſe, I glory in the effect.

What

What an extraordinary wedding you have had. A bride in the ſtraw is not an uncommon thing; and a very lovely one ſhe is by your deſcription. Your friendly heart takes occaſion from this incident, to expatiate on my merits and ill fortune, and you make ſome admirable reflections on the ſeemingly-partial diſtribution of the good things of this world. But, my dear, without extending our views to futurity, let me thankfully reflect that God has given me more talents, acquired if not natural, than the poor ignorant Fanny—that more is required of me; that I have many inlets to happineſs unknown to her; that I wiſh not for the happineſs of an oiſter, a creature hardly alive, and that we are all ſo pleaſed with our dear identical ſelves, that as Gay has it, not one of us rebellious mutineers

> Would entirely change our name and nature,
> To be the very envy'd creature.

I think

I think the Squire diſcovers much ſagacity in applying to you to inform his uninformed wife—what a wide field for your benevolence, and how productive may it be of good to numbers. What a ſweet landſcape you have given me. I ſee your pretty cot overgrown with ivy and woodbines; the ſpeckled poultry; the ſweet-breath'd cow with her full udders, the nibbling ſheep and the enameled mead, and what not that can compoſe a piece replete with rural beauties.

The good woman of this houſe ſeems a little mortified that I am not raiſed by marriage; it certainly would have been the better for her; but, to do her juſtice, ſhe is not the leſs kind. I fear they are not in over and above good circumſtances. She borrowed all the little money I had, ſometime ago, to make up a ſum, and has not offered to pay it again. During my exultations

ultations, and ſubſequent dejection and illneſs, I could earn nothing; ſo I ſhall never have the face to aſk her for it. In truth, Eliza, my heart has felt ſo jocund at being delivered from ſo terrible a thraldom, that it has not yet been pained at all about my circumſtances.—

Here I was interrupted by my old tormentor, who came once more, he ſaid, to ſpend half an hour with me. I replied, he was welcome, but he muſt excuſe my continuing to ply the needle. He intimated that probably it would be the laſt time he ſhould trouble me. I aſſured him, ſmiling, it was not in his power to give me either pain or pleaſure. He was, or pretended to be, ſorrowful. I wiſhed him, with a ſincere heart, very well. And ſo much for Brightley. How often has that name occurred in our correſpondence? Sure Maria may find a better

ſubject for her pen, when ſhe writes in future to her faithful Eliza, whom at this time ſhe ſalutes with that real affection that always fills the breaſt of her

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

IF you are ſtill ſo ſtrongly impelled, my dear Maria, to ſtay where you are, at leaſt if you are reſolved not to come hither, I will ſay no more about it.

I have been to the great houſe ſeveral times; the young woman really improves upon my hands, as does the maſter. I have adviſed them to diſmiſs ſeveral of the ſervants handſomely, and provide new ones that may pay a proper reſpect to the miſtreſs, which it was unlikely theſe would do, who had lived fellow-ſervants

with her. They implicitly follow my directions.—But I am interrupted.—My dear, as I had begun this, and was interrupted, as you ſee, it ſhall go; but the remainder of this letter will be in another ſtyle, for I ſhall not treat of births and marriages, the white and joyous parts of human viciſſitude, but lead you to the ſilent couch, where lies ſtretched the venerable remains of my aged mother; a winter flower (as Pope ſays) that muſt ſoon be conſigned to its native duſt.

She was well as uſual when I left her to write to you. Sarah happened to look in upon her, and perceiving a great change in her looks, called to me immediately, when in a few moments ſhe expired without a groan. Indeed the poor taper has twinkled beyond expectation. So it was not ſurprizing that it ſhould go out at once. So eaſy a paſſage as hers ſeems to have

have been, takes off from the horrors of this (to all) inevitable ſtroke. Somebody ſays, that every breach which Death makes in the conſtitution, Nature kindly covers with inſenſibility. But yet ſometimes, my dear, the agonies of this dire hour evinces too much ſenſibility. Thank heaven this was not the caſe with my poor parent. My dear Maria will not expect excuſes on account of brevity now; and ſhe will believe that at all times and ſeaſons, I am her

Sincere and affectionate friend,

E. HARWOOD.

LETTER LX.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

ALAS, my dear, when I read the few lines on the top of your's, I little expected that awful and ſolemn article of information which it contains; as little as you, my dear, ſuſpected that the object of your long ſolicitude and filial piety was breathing her laſt, while you was writing to me. There remains nothing for me to ſay on the occaſion, but that I participate with you in the comfortable reflection of her quiet diſmiſſion; only I muſt add, my dear, that the conſciouſneſs of having acted as you have, is a great ſupport in

ſuch

ſuch deprivations; nay, in ſome caſes, that only can render them ſupportable. It was hoping againſt probability that the grizzly monſter would long forbear entering your ſweet retreat, and throw a gloom over the gay tints of the blooming year. But I truſt, my dear, it will, to your right turned mind, be but a tranſient gloom; and I know by this time your friendly heart inclines you to liſten to whatever comes from your Maria Barlowe.

My quondam lover is gone in good earneſt, and Clarkſon would fain be telling a tender tale; but upon my word I am ſick of man; and were I in eaſy circumſtances, I am half afraid I ſhould become ſomething of a coquet; but if that were poſſible, I could not pain ſuch a heart as Clarkſon's, he has too much merit, were it in my power, ſo I permit not a word in that ſtrain. Mr. and Mrs. Rowe have

poſtponed their return, and are about to make a little tour round ſome of the weſtern and other countries. My amuſements, you may ſuppoſe, are now confined to a narrow circle. I am acquainted with nobody, excluſive of the people of the houſe, and Mr. Clarkſon; but it ſignifies not; he reads and converſes; I have ſome books; my mind is ſerene; I can ſcribble to my dear Eliza; and permit me to ſay religion ſweetens and dignifies the whole. Adieu, my dear Eliza, I ſhall accompany you in idea, following the venerable remains to that ſilent and dark houſe, where one day (tremendous thought!) muſt lie Eliza, and her

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER LXI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

I HAVE not written to you ſometime, my dear Eliza, having nothing very material to write about; and being under a neceſſity of finiſhing a piece of work which has ſpoiled my eyes, and produced me but a ſmall pittance.

But this day's poſt has brought me a a letter from Mr. Rowe, containing a piece of news, which, thank heaven, neither affects nor ſurpriſes me; namely, that on Tueſday laſt, the renowned hero of my little annals was married to the accom-

pliſhed Miſs Fanſhaw. Mr. Rowe is in high indignation, and writes that he will have nothing more to do with him, for his duplicity diſqualifies him for a friend. Mr. Clarkſon came in juſt as I had read the letter, and ſeeing me look full of ſomething, ſaid, I hope you have received ſome good news, Madam? Why, indeed, I can't call it bad—it is neither good, bad, or indifferent, as they ſay—in ſhort, Mr. Brightley is married! I ſaw it in the papers, replied he, but did not mention it, as I did not know how you might receive the intelligence. I ſaid I was obliged to him, but he might now be convinced how I took it. Well then, ſaid he, as you are ſo compoſed, I can tell you a little more about it. I had buſineſs in the neighbourhood of Hanover-Square, and taking notice of two or three carriages waiting at St. George's church, the ſervants with white favours, and the uſual

hymeneal

hymeneal ſymbols, I had the curioſity to wait a few moments for their coming out, when I own I was ſurprized to ſee no other than Mr. Brightely and his bride. I caught his eye, and I could not help thinking he looked a little abaſhed; probably he recollected in whoſe company he had ſeen me. And pray, ſaid I, how looked the bride? how was ſhe dreſſed? I am one of the worſt in the world, replied Clarkſon, to deſcribe dreſſes, but it was white, with, I believe, ſome ſilver, and her hair much dreſſed, and very white with powder. Well, ſaid I, I wiſh from the bottom of my heart he may make a good huſband, and ſhe a deſerving wife.

Poor Clarkſon made me an hundred compliments on my forgiveneſs and generoſity, as he called it, and was going on with, O that heaven would beſtow wealth on me, and that you could——I cut him

ſhort, and begged him to call another ſubject, as I will now do Eliza, and wrapping myſelf up in my own integrity as a coat of mail, invulnerable to envy, revenge, or any of that baleful tribe, leave them to the joys of the honey moon.—Can I be enough thankful, my dear Eliza, for that contentedneſs of ſpirits with which I ſit down to a temperate meal, that I repine not at the allotments of Providence, or hanker after many things I might once have reaſonably expected.

I am ſadly afraid, my dear, that theſe poor people are in low circumſtances; the good woman is often in tears; they live lovingly together, and are bleſſed with fine children; but I ſhall ſoon know if it be ſo, it will ſenſibly affect me on their account, and my own too, diſintereſted as I am, it would certainly diſcom-

poſe a little that contented ſpirit of which I have boaſted.

Do, my dear Eliza, tell me how you do, and how your work of creation goes on, for you muſt new-make, I think, the ſquire and his wife.

You have not mentioned Mrs. Fiſher; I ſuppoſe you apprized her of the demize of Mrs. Harwood.

Don't you think my poor dear brother is certainly dead.—Eighteen tedious months, and no tidings!

When you and I firſt commenced this correſpondence, how rich was I in a father doatingly fond, and a brother whom I loved with an affection more than

ſiſterly

ſiſterly—but no murmurings for the ſake of conſiſtency.

God bleſs you, continue to love with all her inconſiſtencies,

Your affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER LXII.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

IT gives me great pleaſure, my dear Maria, to find you in ſuch a ſerene and contented ſtate of mind; may the feaſt be continual.

One would think there was ſome preſſing neceſſity for that fellow's marrying ſo haſtily—however, I rejoice that you are now fairly rid of him.

Indeed, Maria, there is no occaſion to new-make my new acquaintance—the great Maker of us all, or (if you like the

the phraſe better) Nature has not been illiberal to them; but parental weakneſs in the mother prevented the ſon's making any improvement—and as to the girl, ſhe never had any inſtruction.—Before I loſt my poor mother I began to teach her to read, and reſumed my tutorſhip as ſoon as I poſſibly could.—Mr. Lawſon (for I will no more call him 'Squire) has ſome latent good qualities, which have been called out by the preſent conjuncture of circumſtances.

The day after my mother died he deſired to ſpeak with me at our own houſe —he ſaid, he hoped I would not take it amiſs, for he did not deſign to affront me, but I had been ſo kind to Fanny, and indeed had given him ſuch good advice (I uſe his very words) that he did not know how to make me amends, and as it was a chargeable time to me, he hoped

hoped I would receive a little paper, which he took from his pocket, as a debt due to me—but don't look at it till I am gone. I anſwered, Sir, I thank you—you may always command my beſt ſervices without fee or reward, but I will not offend you by a refuſal. On looking into the paper, my dear, I was ſurpriſed with a note for an hundred pounds, which (delicate as you call me) I ſhall make no ſcruple of accepting from a perſon of his great wealth, as I fully intend to devote my time and talents to his benefit.

So you ſee, my dear Maria, I am become ſuddenly rich.—One part of this ſum you will readily ſuppoſe was expended on funeral expences.—I could have buried my poor parent, thank God, without it, but not without ſome abridgements.

The

The half of it ſhall be conveyed to you, if you abſolutely reſolve not to come hither—ſo do not diſtreſs yourſelf about the circumſtances of the good people on your own account—but reckon upon fifty pounds—a larger ſum than you have been miſtreſs of for ſome time.

You enquire of my ſiſter—I wrote to them—Mr. Fiſher, in anſwer, informed me, that my ſiſter, after being delivered of a dead child, continued in a very languiſhing ſtate of health—that they were very fearful of a decline—that ſhe was incapable of undertaking ſuch a journey, nor could he think of leaving her—that ſhe was much affected with the death of our mother, and often mentioned the very ſtrong deſire ſhe had to ſee me.—If ſhe did not get better, he hoped I was not ſo wedded to my retirement, but that

that I would visit them, as the object of my care and confinement was now no more.

But I hope she will get better, my dear, for it will be a hard matter to unroot me—indeed this is the spot on which I wish to grow, till mowed down by the unsparing scythe of Death.

Mr. Lawson has made great regulations in his family; the old servants are dismissed, with each a bounty to prevent grumbling and backbiting—the new ones find no difficulty in calling his wife mistress—he finds domestic pleasures, of which he had no idea—is less devoted to the sports of the field, and, by degrees, we hope to make him taste the pleasure of temperance.

A letter

A letter is this moment brought me from my ſiſter, who deſcribes her ſtate of health as deplorable indeed.—She conjures me ſo earneſtly to come and ſee her, that I muſt abſolutely think of going—but I will not be abſent above one month, my dear, if I can poſſibly help it.—The diſtance, you know, is great, and the ſeaſon for travelling unpropitious.—

If you want money, for heaven's ſake, my deareſt creature, delay not writing the inſtant you receive this, otherwiſe I can't hear from you till I am arrived there.—I ſhould not have a moment's peace if I thought you would diſhonour our friendſhip by ſcruples unworthy of it. However, let me have a line, addreſſed to Mr. Fiſher's, at ———.

If I hear nothing from you immediately, I ſhall be inclined to hope that you

you deſign to come down, and confer the greateſt pleaſure on me, namely, that of ſeeing the ever amiable Maria under the low, but friendly roof of her

ELIZA HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER LXIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

WHERE are you now, my dear Eliza? I ſuppoſe comforting your languid ſiſter—while your poor Maria is again "taking arms againſt a ſea of trouble."—But to be explicit.

I did not write to you, my dear, becauſe at that time I had no preſſing want of money; beſides, I knew your journey was not to be performed but at conſiderable expence; but three days ſince a creditor of the poor man's (Mr. Walford) laid an execution, I believe they call it, on his body and goods. You may judge the

the grief and conſternation of the poor wife, and you will ſee the diſtreſs of your Maria, once more driven out ſhelterleſs and unfriended—except by you, who are at a diſtance—and to whom I have not the means to convey myſelf.

I told you they had borrowed the little money I had, ſo that a few ſhillings is my whole ſtock.—A perſon is in the houſe to prevent embezzlement, and tomorrow the poor creatures moveables are to be ſold.—At preſent, my dear Eliza, I am more affected by the diſtreſs of theſe, to me, kind people, than by my own immediate wants—when that ſubſides a little, no doubt but they will ſtand before me in fearful array.

Juſt as I had finiſhed the laſt ſentence, the ever generous Clarkſon broke in upon me—I was ſhedding tears for them, and I be-

I believe for myſelf. Without any preface he ſaid, Madam, I am truly concerned for the afflictions of theſe poor people, but beyond expreſſion pained at the thoughts of the inconveniences you may be expoſed to—for here, I ſuppoſe, you cannot ſtay, even while they do; and you have favoured me with ſo much of your own ſituation, that I very much fear you are not provided with an eligible aſylum, your friend being at a diſtance, who, no doubt, would receive you with open arms.—I ſay, all theſe things conſidered, will make my dear Miſs Barlowe think me actuated by ſiniſter motives, if I urge her to accept of all my little power to render her ſervice—if not in the way that my fond heart would preſcribe, yet, dear Madam, deny me not the only pleaſure, excluſive of that, this world can afford me—that of ſhewing

myſelf

myſelf your friend by proofs eſſential to your eaſe and comfort.

I was ſtruck with his generoſity, my dear, and wiſhed it in my power to give him my hand and heart on the inſtant—but it would not be.

I replied, ever ſince I have known Mr. Clarkſon his character has roſe upon me—if eſteem only were a ſufficient foundation for that union (for I will not affect to miſunderſtand you) and I were poſſeſſed of a large fortune, I would not heſitate a moment (free as I am of all engagements) to give you my willing hand—but as it is, Sir—without money—and without the inclination your warmth and merit deſerve—it is impoſſible—and as to any ſervices of another kind, believe me, Mr. Clarkſon, when I tell you it does not proceed from pride, but from the

ſingular delicacy of my feelings that I cannot accept of them.—You may know me in an happier hour—if not—may the Almighty make you fourfold amends for the kindneſs you have ſhewed to me.—He wept and bid me adieu.

If I could love this young man, my dear, the narrowneſs of his circumſtances would be no bar, for I am content with a little, or if I was high in fortune, perhaps I might bring myſelf to think of it, becauſe I ſhould enlarge the power of ſo very worthy a man to do good—beſides it woul be a kind of little equivalent for my want of paſſion.

And now, my dear Eliza, you will be abſolutely frightened for the poor Maria, who with a few ſhillings in her pocket, and without intimately knowing a ſingle ſoul, ſave Clarkſon, is going to London —becauſe London is near—and there are

in

in the country no friendly arms to receive me. My Eliza's cot is without its amiable miſtreſs; were it not, how ſhould I get thither? I take this unfiniſhed and blotted ſcroll with me, on which occaſionally to ſcribble my eventful hiſtory.

When I had put up my little all, I took a ſorrowful leave of poor Mrs. Walford and her weeping infants, and continued in a mournful revery till awakened by the wheel's rattling on the ſtones. The lamps were juſt lighted, and figure to yourſelf what were my reflections on ſeeing thouſands of luſty people, every one of whom I conjectured had a home and a place where to lay their head, while your poor Maria was like the ſolitary dove in the deluge, that could find no reſt; but, alas! ſhe had no ark to return to.

At laſt I thought I muſt have recourſe to ſome little ſubterfuge to ſcreen me from

inſults (to which my youth and appearance were particularly obnoxious) ſo going to the miſtreſs in the bar, I aſked her if the ſtage to ſuch a place did not ſet out from thence? ſhe anſwered, Yes, very early in the morning. I begged I then might have a bed, which ſhe, after looking at me very earneſtly, ordered. It was not yet bedtime, but I durſt not venture into the ſtreets, ſo I ſat down in the bar by her, but I found I was in the way, and expoſed to the eyes of ſeveral men who ſtared at me uncivilly. I was overwhelmed with grief, but the good woman neither expreſſed pity or curioſity. After watching a large dial, of which we had a view, for about an hour, I deſired to be ſhewn to my room. Then, my dear Eliza, I could not help praying that the Almighty would take ſuch an inſignificant, but I hoped innocent crea-

ture, to himſelf. And ſo good night, my dear Eliza.

After a ſleepleſs night, I diſcharged my night's lodging, and gratified the ſervant-maid with a ſhilling, deſiring her to take care of my box, and ſallied into the ſtreets without breakfaſt, for God knows I had no ſtomach, and ſeeing a bill on a low houſe in a creditable looking neighbourhood, I aſked to ſee a ready furniſhed room; it was clean, with a good faſtening on the door; they demanded five ſhillings a-week; I had ſeven or eight in my pocket, ſo agreed for it, and deſired them to ſend ſome perſon whom they knew for my box, which they did. The people were going to breakfaſt, I tried to ſwallow a diſh of tea, but could not, ſo returned to my room under pretence of diſpoſing my baggage in proper

order; but indeed, my dear, it was to weep and to ruminate.

Well, about the hour that people who have houſes and ſtated meals dine, I went out again, that it might be conjectured I was going to dine with ſomebody. I traverſed through many ſtreets, ſenſible of no fatigue, for where the mind is free the body is delicate, till I ſaw by a church clock I had been out long enough; my ſtomach gnawed, ſo I bought a penny bun, which I ſwallowed without appetite, and returned to the lodging again, and have thus far wrote to my dear Eliza; but as I don't know when I ſhall ſend this, becauſe uncertain whither you ſhall direct your anſwer, I believe I muſt throw it into a kind of journal.

This

This is Saturday, and it draws near the hour of repoſe. I fancy I need not ſtretch my invention to cover my wretchedneſs from theſe people. Every body in this, to me, dreadful town, has ſo much to do, at leaſt they ſeem to have, that they ſeldom trouble themſelves with inconſiſtent appearances.

So here, my dear Eliza, I will ſhut up this diſmal Saturday. To-morrow I ſhall ſeek conſolation in ſome one of the numerous places ſet-apart for the worſhip of the Almighty, to whom I may at all times have acceſs. That thought is of ſuch aſtoniſhing import to a creature who is but as a drop to the ocean, that it ought to weigh down my ſwollen eyes in peaceful ſlumber; perhaps it may—ſo good night, Eliza.

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Sunday evening.——I had ſome ſleep, my dear, and told my landlady I would breakfaſt with her, for to take no care of my poor body, would be a premeditated ſuicide. I ſatisfied her for my breakfaſt, and ſallied out once more.

St. James's Church opened it's hoſpitable door to receive your forlorn friend. I walked about till ſervice began, but no friendly pew was thrown open for my reception. My pride was not offended, for ſure I am lowly, but my wonder was excited as I am dreſſed decently, but as my aſpect is ſo piteous the people might fear it was a contageous ſorrow. However that be, I ſtood in the aiſle, and now and then ſat down with ſome women, who perhaps might be ſome of them almoſt as wretched as myſelf. Almoſt, my dear, but not quite, I dare ſay, becauſe I have a tenderneſs of nature that yearns after

after ſome friendly intimate; and I have, by conſtitution, a ſenſibility which has been whetted by my education—but no more of that.

When church was done I went out with the throng, and ſauntered into the Park; it was full of gay and fine people. I ſtrolled up and down the Mall till I was tired, and then reſted on one of the benches till evening ſervice; the days are ſhorter, ſo that night has brought me home.

I ſipp'd another diſh of tea—what to-morrow will bring forth I know not; but what ſhould it bring forth? I think a deſert would to me be far preferable to this city. The hollow winds, murmurring amidſt the lofty trees of ſome wide foreſts, would ſeem reſponſive to my ſighs, while here the puſhing multitude ſeem to ſhove me aſide, as a thing

that belongs to nobody. I can't go into a ſhop and aſk for employment—ſtrangers will ſcrutinize about my character, and whom ſhall I call to anſwer for me? Indeed ſome inherent, unconquerable delicacy with-holds me; were it not for that, I might let Clarkſon know how diſtreſſed I am—or I might go down to Doctor Goodall. I might ſell my cloaths to defray the expences of a journey, even to you. If you were at home I believe I actually ſhould. I have objections inſurmountable to any of the above-mentioned expedients, except that.

You will not ſee this, my dear Eliza, yet I would not wiſh you ſhould be ſo much pained, ſo adieu, adieu.

This is Monday, my dear; Black Monday let me call it. I have formed a re-

ſolution to make another preregrination through the ſtreets, for it is at a diſtance, to that old gentlewoman's who employed me at Mrs. Walford's, and aſk her for ſome buſineſs of the ſame kind. She will perhaps recollect me, at leaſt ſhe will remember the circumſtance.

This, my dear, has been a wonderful day to me. I went, as I told you I deſigned, to find the old gentlewoman, but without eating. My mind was ſo engroſſed, as it often has been, that I heeded it not. It was, as I informed you, at a great diſtance—I enquired the way; but, through inattention, found it not till I was faint with walking, and when in the ſtreet could not find the ſhop, or any perſon of that name who lived there.

This diſappointment, joined with the fatigue, almoſt overcame me, ſo that I was faint and weak, and my eyes began

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This diſappointment, joined with the fatigue, almoſt overcame me, ſo that I was faint and weak, and my eyes began

to grow dim. The horror of dropping down in the ſtreets of London, made me aſſume courage enough to go into a ſhop, and beg to ſit down a moment. A young woman behind the compter kindly fetched me a glaſs of water, which I drank. She ſaid I looked very pale; one compaſſionate word, even from a ſtranger, was enough to draw tears, but they relieved me; ſo thanking her I wiped my eyes, and was moving with trembling ſteps towards my little lodging, when juſt as I was croſſing a gateway that led to an inn-yard, who ſhould be coming out but my uncle Barlowe! He would have paſſed without knowing me, but I catched his arm, and ſaid, dear Sir, how do you do?—He ſtarted——What, my niece Maria! Dear child how do you do? You look very poorly—how long have you been in town?—My emotions were ſo great I could ſcarce ſpeak, which

he

he perceiving, took my hand and led me into the room he had juſt quitted. Poor man, early as it was, he was not quite ſober. He ordered ſome wine, I eat a morſel of bread, and drank one glaſs, which refreſhing me, I was able to aſk him what had brought him to town, which he diſlikes I know prodigiouſly. Why a letter, my dear, ſaid he, from the Captain of an Eaſt-Indiaman. Here it is; and I read as follows:

SIR,

AFTER a good paſſage, thank God, the Earl of Aſhburnham, from Bengal, is arrived in the Downs. If you will, as ſoon as it ſuits with your conveniency, enquire for Captain Henſhaw, at his houſe at Stepney, I will inform you of

ſomething

ſomething relating to your family, of great conſequence. I am,

SIR,

Your humble ſervant,

R. HENSHAW.

MY uncle went on, ſaying, my dear, perhaps this Captain brings ſome news of poor Jack; I determined to ſet out immediately, though you know how things are at home, and if you will, my dear, we will go together to Stepney.

A gleam of hope, my dear Eliza, irradicated my almoſt torpid boſom in an inſtant; and I cried out, O, Sir, let us not delay one moment. He called a coach, and away we drove to Stepney. The Captain was found as ſoon as enquired for, and happened to be at home.

My

My uncle ſaid his name was Barlowe, and he waited on him in conſequence of a letter received two days ſince. He deſired us to be ſeated, and ſaid, is this young lady your daughter? No, Sir, it is my niece; her name too is Barlowe. Maria Barlowe, is it not? rejoined the Captain. Yes, Sir; why then my buſineſs is principally with her; (O how my heart throbbed) you have a nephew, Sir, and you a brother, Miſs, in the Eaſt-Indies. O yes, Sir, what news of him? Why, Madam, he is well and rich, and has a proſpect of being much richer; and then he gave us a detail of the rapid riſe and progreſs of poor Jack; but really, my dear, ſuch a tide of pleaſing ſenſations flowed in upon me, that I cannot tell now what he ſaid, but he concluded with letting us know that he had remitted no leſs than ſeven thouſand pounds for my uſe, which he

he had brought ſafely, and lodged at a banker's in Lombard Street.

My uncle kiſſed me, and wiſhed me joy. Joyful as I was, I teſtified it by no rediculous agitations. I can truly ſay, that on the inſtant, gratitude to heaven engroſſed me, and I behaved with compoſure and decency.

He then proceeded to tell me my brother heard of the death of our dear father, before he ſailed. That he told the Captain to write to his uncle, for that perhaps his ſiſter might be with him, or if not, he would poſſibly know where ſhe was; and he ſummed up all by ſaying, that my brother deſigned to remit me as large, if not a larger ſum next year. My uncle preſt the Captain to accept of ſome acknowledgment, which he refuſed, and then gave him an invitation

invitation to his houſe, which he took in good part, but will hardly accept of, as he lives at ſuch a diſtance, and then giving us draughts on the banker, we took our leave of the honeſt tar.

I could hardly think but I was in a dream, my dear, as the coach rolled back again to the city; but my poor uncle was full of his congratulations and careſſes, ſaying how rejoiced he was ſuch a deſerving girl ſhould be ſet above dependence. I preſt him to take a part of the ſum, but he replied, no, my dear, I don't want it, my circumſtances are happy enough in that particular; I am curſed with a ſhrew, but ſhe minds the main chance.

By this time we arrived at the banker's; I took one thouſand, and let the reſt

reſt remain. We returned to the inn, we had left, and had a ſlight repaſt; but, my dear, I could not eat; pleaſure and pain often produce the ſame effect. However I purchaſed a ring of ſome value, which I put on my uncle's finger. He drank freely, and began to be much in liquor; he ſaid he would return home betimes in the morning, I beſought him to retire to bed, and we parted moſt affectionately.

I then called another coach, and drove to my lodgings, (with what different emotions, my Eliza will eaſily gueſs) and wrote thus far. As I am time enough for the poſt, I will call for the gratulations of my deareſt friend, and will call upon you to join with me in thankſgivings, the moſt pure and ardent, to that God who has turned my mourning

ing into joy, who hath regarded the lowlineſs of his handmaiden, ſo that ſhe can now ſubſcribe

Your happy

and affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER LXIV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

MY dear Eliza will not be ſurprized at my letters following quick on one another. I can hardly deſcribe my preſent feelings. I could not have thought it poſſible that a little droſs ſhould have the amazing power to alter every object. Joy and ſorrow, with regard to ſleep, have had the ſame effect, for I could not reſt; but then, my dear, I feel light and refreſhed.

May I not hope to offer up (praiſe is above prayer) an acceptable ſacrifice

crifice, as my whole ſoul is replete with adoration.—My brother was dead,—and is alive again—was loſt,—and is found. But I feel a little abatement of joy on reflecting how it was poſſible for him to accumulate ſo much in ſo ſhort a time by honeſt means. God forbid that he ſhould be made rich by rapine and oppreſſion. I am unacquainted with theſe things; my own hands are guiltleſs, and I will appropriate his gifts to ſuch purpoſes as my heart approves.

I ſent betimes this morning for Mr. Clarkſon, who came immediately. I told him I was going to put his friendſhip to the teſt, and the firſt proof I ſhould require of it was that he would ſet about enquiring into poor Walford's affairs, as I deſigned to do ſomething for him. But I added, ſmiling, that he might

might not think I dabbled in the black art, I had heard from my brother in India. He ſaid he would go that inſtant, and before I could imagine he was got thither, returned.

He found the poor woman and her little ones in a room; ſhe had hired near her old habitation. The chief creditor had taken every thing; her poor huſband was at liberty, but ſhe ſuppoſed he would not be ſo long, except the reſt of his creditors were with-held from diſtreſſing them, by the knowledge they had that there was nothing to ſatisfy them.

I enquired, continued he, what might be the ſum total of his debts? She burſt into tears, and ſaid two hundred pounds. Take the money, ſaid I, Mr. Clarkſon, and pay them directly.

Hold,

Hold, Madam, ſaid he, it will be worth while to try to bring them to ſome compoſition, and indeed the juſteſt method; for the principal creditor has not been quite paid; and if you chuſe to extend your bounty farther, it will be better to ſet them going again, eſpecially as I find the people have not been extravagant, but beginning with nothing, houſe-rent dear, and their family encreaſing, they were ſoon embarraſſed beyond their power of extrication.

Well, do good, Sir, if it is not too inconvenient to you, ſee what can be done, and call upon me in the evening. He ſaid he had the ſtrongeſt incentives to be ſpeedy in the execution, namely, the pleaſure he took in obeying my commands, and the hope of being ſerviceable to the poor family.

So

So here, my dear Eliza, is a part of this day's tranſactions—but I cloſe not here; you ſhall have the ſequel before I ſleep. Permit me in this interval to aſk you, in what manner I ſhall evince my love and gratitude to you. Will you live with me, my dear, and ſhare my decent competence?—Or will you buy that cottage? Think of ſomething to appeaſe my uneaſy gratitude.

Indefatigable as Clarkſon has been, I ſhall be but juſt in time for the poſt; he went, or ſent to all the people, they will readily give a diſcharge for the half of their debt; ſo I have given him ſomething more than a hundred pounds, which, early in the morning, he undertakes to diſtribute among them. I would tell you what I propoſe to do to-morrow, but really I find nature will exert her powers; ſhe may be put out of her courſe

courſe, by joy, ſorrow, pain or pleaſure, but ſhe is tenacious of her rights, and will be obeyed; for ſleep will in a few moments cover me (as Sancho ſays) as with a cloak. I can only juſt add, I am, my dear Eliza's,

Moſt affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

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LETTER LXV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My dear Eliza,

MR. CLARKSON was with me very early this morning, and ſaid never were people more happy than Mr. and Mrs. Walford, though they knew not of any farther good that awaited them; the pleaſure of being clear of the world, was, to them, almoſt inexpreſſible. I ſhould have told you, my dear, that I deſired him to take the houſe, which was ſtill empty, and he did ſo.

I made him the warmeſt acknowledgments for his kindneſs and diſpatch, and then went by myſelf (for I would no longer detain Mr. Clarkſon) and bought for them plain furniture of every kind; as I know the houſe I was not at a loſs—two decent beds, with a little one for the children, boiling pots, ſtoves, chairs, and tables; a jack, table-cloths, ſheets and blankets,; in ſhort, every thing neceſſary for the comfort of life, and all for leſs than another hundred.

Perhaps you will wonder, my dear, how I managed it; but you may, in a few hours have, in this place, every thing of every kind, if you have but that ſovereign and all-powerful thing called money; if not, you may as well be in the deſrets of Arabia.

I ordered them all to be ſent to Mr. Walford, and directed for him, and wrote a ſhort note to the good woman, deſiring her to place the furniture, and I would wait on her in a ſhort time, and take poſſeſſion of the room I lately occupied; for I propoſe to be there to-morrow evening; ſo direct your next letter thither, my dear.

I believe no fine lady at an auction of the moſt ſcarce and valuable trinkets, with a pocket to buy every thing her heart could wiſh, ever experienced more pleaſure than I did in purchaſing this houſhold ſtuff.

I have ſeen nought amiſs of the people at whoſe houſe I have lodged, theſe few eventful days, ſo I will make them a handſome preſent.

And

And now, my dear, the opinion of impulſes is again revived, for I came to town without any very good reaſon for doing ſo.—But ought I not rather to ſay I was conducted by the hand of Providence, when I met my uncle, for though the event would have been pretty much the ſame in a few days, yet a few more ſuch miſerable days might have been inſupportable.

I ſhall write immediately after I am at Mrs. Walford's. My Eliza muſt excuſe the many inaccuracies which have undoubtedly ſlipped from the hurrying fingers of her

Moſt affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER LXVI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

My Dear Eliza,

IT is not for me to deſcribe the joy and gratitude with which I was receiv-ed laſt night by this good man and woman.

They had fixed moſt of the things, and prepared a little ſupper. They were

were ready to worſhip me; but I ſaid, pray, my good friends, do not oppreſs me with acknowledgments—I owe you much.—Did you not ſhelter me for a long time, when you could not ſo well afford to entertain me as I can now afford to do theſe little matters for you?

My brother (I ſuppoſe Mr. Clarkſon told you) has remitted me a large ſum. They ſaid Mr. Clarkſon told them no particulars (indeed I gave him none) but only ſaid they were obliged to Miſs Barlowe.

And now, Mr. Walford, continued I, what ſum will enable you to procure bread for your family in future? The modeſt man replied, that he dared to ſay he could have a ſmall ſtock upon

credit, as he was known not to be diſhoneſt; and with the bleſſing of God he hoped to be able to clear it, and get a living beſides.

No, I anſwered, that will not do—and taking out three notes, of an hundred each, ſaid, take theſe, and may they become the fruitful mothers of hundreds more.

Repetitions of their acknowledgements would be irkſome to you, as it was to me, ſo I forbear.

You ſee, my dear Eliza, I have diſpoſed of five hundred pounds, but you will not blame me.

I am rich beyond my expectation or deſerts. Have not I more than ſix thouſand pounds! What a treaſure!

And

And I will lay ſome of it up where there is neither moth or ruſt or thieves.

I write by this poſt to my friends Mr. and Mrs. Rowe; (they do not know I have been from this place) and tell them I have had good news from my brother, without being circumſtantial.

It will not be long, my dear Eliza, I hope, before I hear from you—I think I may expect it now.

I deſire my reſpects to Mrs. Fiſher, and moſt ſincerely wiſh her recovery.

If you are returning weſtward, may you have better weather than common for the ſeaſon. May you be ſafe from robbers and all perils—may you have

good health and chearful ſpirits; in ſhort, my Eliza, what of good is not wiſhed you by

Your moſt affectionate,

M. BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER LXVII.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

WHAT various paſſions have your laſt letter, my dear Maria, excited in the boſom of your friend. It was kind of you to forbear ſending the ſoul-harrowing contents of the firſt part of that written at your arrival in London; as it was, my tears dropped faſter than you could write; but then, what a heartfelt joy ſucceded! The

ſimily of a mountain being lifted off the breaſt, comes the neareſt to my ſenſations on the occaſion.

O, my good girl, never let the virtuous mind deſpair. You will believe me, when I aſſure you, ſuch an acquiſition to myſelf could not have given me ſo much joy. I have not experienced ſuch ſevere trials. I am many years older than you—things attractive to, and becoming, at your time of life, attract not me.

I told you long ago I was a kind of Stoic, ſave in my affection for you. There indeed, I am "tremblingly alive all o'er." Judge then, my ſweet young friend, if I did not obey your call in joining with you in thankſgiving to the Almighty; ardent, and as pure

pure I hope, as an imperfect creature can pay.

Blame you, Maria, for helping the diſtreſſed! Indeed I do not blame you, only, my dear, take care that your liberality flows in proper channels, elſe it will not have the effect you deſign, though your goodneſs is the ſame; but there are many artful people who can patch up a tale that will eaſily touch a heart ſo naturally compaſſionate.

Think not I have a doubt about the good people you have ſo kindly relieved, or that I call you profuſe for doing ſo much.—One large bounty is often of more real ſervice to ſociety, (as well as the individual) than many ſmall ones; beſides as you ſay, my dear, you owed them much.

Set your heart at reſt about the manner of the money's being acquired, although your brother was the accumulator. There are many ways of getting money, authorized by cuſtom and ſituation, of which we know nothing, and conſequently are not competent judges of their rectitude. We are only accountable for ourſelves, and that is enough, my dear, for the very beſt of us.

My ſiſter (who joins me in gratulations) is much better. Sickneſs, of which ſhe has had a ſmart touch, has had the beſt influence on her diſpoſition.

Indeed, ſhe is become another and better woman; not that ſhe ever was a bad one, but there was a ſelfiſhneſs which uſed to hurt and diſguſt me; but

but ſhe is now my ſiſter, and we ſhall in future (I hope) be engaged in reciprocal good offices.

But I muſt take notice of the overflowing of your benevolence towards me.

You aſk if I will live with you? Where do you propoſe, my dear, to fix your habitation?—But that you may not be miſled by the queſtion, be aſſured I never will (if I can help it) have any other reſidence but the woodbine cot in Monmouthſhire.

As to buying it—why you muſt come and ſee it firſt; and that I can't flatter myſelf that you will, at this inclement ſeaſon; however we will talk of this hereafter. I ſhall ſet out on my return to it immediately, but keep writing

writing on, my dear, and direct thither, for your letters are to me invaluable.

To conclude with a phraſe of our own (for I cannot find a better) what of good is not wiſhed you by

Your ever affectionate,

ELIZA HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER LXVIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

TO be informed my dear Eliza is well, and that ſhe approves of my conduct, is a large addition to my happineſs. Mr. Walford has not loſt one cuſtomer, and I hope and believe they will do extremely well. My dear, I am as happy as a princeſs, and really fancy I have more faithful adherents than many princeſſes have. Bleſs me, is it not ſtrange that many people have buſhels of money and yet don't know how to buy one

one ſcrap of pleaſure? But how fooliſh I talk; as if the whole world could agree in their notions of pleaſure.

Perhaps you will think, my dear, that Clarkſon has dropt my acquaintance, or that I have ſhaken him off, now I am become a lady of preſent fortune, and great expectations—but it is not ſo, he ſtill hovers about me; and really, my dear, if I loved him as well as I think I ought to do, or if I had any inclination to marry, I could not beſtow my money on a more deſerving man. Mrs. Walford tells me, a young gentleman enquires for me, ſo we will reſume this ſubject again by and by.

And who do you think wanted me, Eliza? why, no other than Blanchard, Miſs Freeland's old ſuitor—I profeſs I did

I did not know him at firſt, till after many bows and ſcrapes he told me his name. I enquired of Mr. Freeland's family—he had not been there lately, he ſaid, but he heard Miſs was in a dangerous ſtate of health. I replied, I was etremely ſorry for the old gentleman. He ſaid, he thought Mr. Freeland had not uſed me well. I anſwered, he is convinced of my uprightneſs, and has acknowledged it, which is amends enough for me.

I wanted him to go, but he fidgeted about, and ſtaid tea; and on Mrs. Walford's being called into the ſhop, actually began to ſay ſoft things—wiſhed I would permit him to wait on me, &c. I ſtared at him, and aſked him to what purpoſe—why, truly, he was charmed with me the firſt moment he ſaw me with Miſs Freeland.

My

My dear, I was provoked; for ſome how or other I am ſure the fellow had got inkling of the few thouſands I have got, but pretending ignorance, he ſaid, he was now ſo well eſtabliſhed in trade, that a fortune was not an object to him, and he gave the preference to me above any other lady that he had the happineſs of knowing. I ſaid, I am obliged to you; – but was reſolved to hit on ſome method of finding out if he knew really that I had ſome money; ſo ſtepping out, I gave Mrs. Walford an old letter, and deſired her to bring it me, with a wafer put in it, which ſhe did; when begging his pardon, I pretended to read, and ſaid, dear me, my uncle deſired me to write a note to a gentleman, whoſe addreſs I have forgot—pray, Sir, do you know a Captain Henſhaw, and where he lives? He ſaid, yes; he had ſome knowledge of

of ſuch a perſon, who lived on Stepney Cauſeway.

Then you know I was convinced of Mr. Blanchard's diſintereſtedneſs. I could hardly forbear laughing in his face: on his reſuming the topic, I had half a mind to tell him, that the ſaid Henſhaw had brought over that ſtock of charms with which he was captivated: but I only ſaid, that I had not at preſent the leaſt inclination to enter into any treaties of that kinnd, or would I ever ſhock Mr. Freeland, by receiving the profeſſions of a perſon that had addreſſed his daughter; that if he was inclined to marry, it would be no difficult matter, I preſumed, to find a young lady, eſpecially as he was above mercenary views, that would be glad of ſuch an eſtabliſhment, and give him her

her heart, which it was not in my power to do.—And ſo much for Mr. Blanchard.

I thought this circumſtance would divert you. But I return to the worthy Clarkſon, whom I ſhould be glad to recompenſe in ſome adequate manner, without giving him myſelf. What is your opinion, Eliza; is eſteem alone, on one ſide, a ſufficient foundation on which to build conjugal happineſs? is is not poſſible, if I marry without paſſion, that ſome very agreeable object may have attractions ſufficient to make me uneaſy—or can we love but once; That of being wife to a worthy man, you know, I long ago thought the moſt eligible of ſituations. I am alone, and what is life, my dear, without ſome tender attachment; though let

not

not my Eliza think I am quarreling with life, at my ſtill early age, with power to enjoy all the amuſements I can taſte or wiſh for; it would be an affectation truly deſpicable to pretend to be diſguſted with life.

I hope, by this time, you are ſafely arrived at home; and that one of your charming compoſitions will ſoon ſalute the hand of

Your moſt obliged,

And affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER LXIX.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

HERE I am, my dear Maria, enjoying my ſweet cot in its winter garb, for to ſuch genuine lovers of nature every ſeaſon has its charms; for tho' the pendant icicles hang on the lowly roof--tho' moſt of the trees have ſhed their leafy honours——though the broad river and the ſhallow brook are become a glaſſy ſubſtance—though the feathered tribe,

tribe, ſave the houſhold Red-breaſt, have ceaſed to warble; yet the fire blazes with an inviting warmth—the evergreens look with a more vivid green – the hawthorn-berreis glow with a more lovely ſcarlet; and, to crown all, I can ſpare a cruſt to houſeleſs poverty.

You aſk me, my dear, if eſteem on one ſide, and love on the other, ſo I take it, is a ſufficient foundation for conjugal felicity; and you have fears leſt ſome attractive object ſhould awaken a paſſion, that, in that caſe, would be criminal; and you add, or can we love but once?

I am not exceedingly well qualified to anſwer my dear queriſt, as I have loved only once, and have never mar-

ried; but I ſhould think, Maria, grateful as you are, when you are conſtantly receiving proofs of a tender and virtuous love, from a ſenſible and good man, it cannot fail of producing ſomething ſo much like love on your part, that the ſtructure of conjugal felicity may be as durable as your lives.

That fear of falling in love after you are married, is a romantic notion, unworthy of Maria Barlowe.

Undoubtedly ſuch a diſpoſition as yours may love more than once; we are of different temperaments, though ſuch inſeparable friends—you are compoſed of ſofter materials, and indeed, unfit to wade though life: and Providence, who orders all things aright, has diſpoſed you ſo as to feel vacant without

without ſome tender attachment. You will ſee, that all this tends towards adviſing you to reward Mr. Clarkſon, in the higheſt degree, as he loved you for yourſelf alone.

My pretty neighbour, and her charming boy, improve every day; and Lawſon is really a ſocial and rational creature.

The poor lady, his ſiſter, cannot think as yet that Fanny and ſhe were formed out of the ſame materials, though every church-yard may convince her that we ſhall all be blended in the the ſame maſs of matter at laſt.

Good bye, my ſweet, my amiable friend; may that God who has di-

rected you through many trying ſcenes, ſtill continue to guide you in every event, moſt devoutly wiſhes.

Your affectionate,

E. HARWOOD.

LET-

LETTER LXX.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

My Dear Eliza,

MY agreeable friends are returned, and I have been much engaged with them; they are quite delighted at finding me eaſy and happy.

I have informed them of my brother's kindneſs, but did not ſpecify how far it extended.

Your laſt letter, my dear, has had great influence on me; but I ſhall wave the contents a little, and tell you, that I have purchaſed for Dr. Goodall ſome very ſcarce and valuable books, which Mr. Clarkſon collected; and have ſent them, begging his acceptance, as a ſmall tribute of my gratitude.

You will not, you cannot, my dear, uſe me ſo unkindly as to return the incloſed;—take it to extend your power of relieving "Houſeleſs poverty." You will abſolutely break my heart if you refuſe it.

And ſo you think Clarkſon and I may be happy together. I have revolved it much in my mind, and I begin to think ſo too.

I have

I have conſidered, my dear, that I have ſtill upwards of ſix thouſand pounds, and that at the loweſt rate will bring in near two hundred a year. This, added to the profits of his place, will be a decent competence, and without reckoning on what my brother will farther do for me, will be enough to anſwer every reaſonable want.—Ambition has no bounds, but I have not profited ſo little by adverſity and your correſpondence, as not to have diſcharged ambition.

I don't know what Mr. and Mrs. Rowe will ſay to it, but I am going thither, and will tell you all that paſſes.

Theſe friendly people made me an offer to live with them, my dear;

Your laſt letter, my dear, has had great influence on me; but I ſhall wave the contents a little, and tell you, that I have purchaſed for Dr. Goodall ſome very ſcarce and valuable books, which Mr. Clarkſon collected; and have ſent them, begging his acceptance, as a ſmall tribute of my gratitude.

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Theſe friendly people made me an offer to live with them, my dear;

they ſuppoſed, I fancy, I had received a little ſum from my brother, juſt ſufficient to ſupply me in decent apparel; and they hinted, in the politeſt manner, that if I would favour them ſo far as to make their houſe my conſtant home, while I ſhould continue ſingle, they would think the obligation on their ſide.

You may think, my dear, I felt their generoſity, and that I made a ſuitable anſwer. But I continued, perhaps, my good Sir and Madam, I might not ſtay with you very long, in caſe I was to be with you while I remain ſingle.

They both looked ſurprized—but at length ſaid, ſure Miſs Barlowe, you are not going to marry Clackſon,—

why

why not? he is a moſt deſerving perſon—O yes, they believed he was, but his place would afford but a ſlender maintenance.

He would have ſhared that ſlender ſtipend with me, ſaid I, when I had not a ſhilling—I could not then, for that reaſon, accept of him; now Providence has put it in my power to better his circumſtances—ought he not to have the preference beyond any other, whom I ſhould not help ſuſpecting was chiefly attracted by the few thouſands I poſſeſs.

They looked on each other,—at laſt Mr. Rowe ſaid, Miſs Barlowe, it is not a great while ſince you have been free of Brightley—you have not kept any company, or mixed much

lately in the polite world—no doubt but you may have ſuperior offers.—

Very likely, Sir, but I have my peculiar notions with regard to ſuperior and inferior;—Clarkſon and I think alike, for I thought full as well of myſelf before this affair, and ſo it is plain did he.

They both ſaid, there was ſomething truly great in my way of thinking, and they wiſhed me all poſſible happineſs.

I had your approbation, my dear, and ſhould not have been ſwayed by them whatever they had ſaid; but as they certainly are kind and worthy people, it was right to be open.

But I have not yet ſignified ſo much to the good man himſelf, or have I told

told him what a great bargain he will have of me.

I have my fears and doubts, and yet I have gone too far to recede; it would be uſing him ill to break off, or do I wiſh it.

But I have ſcribbled a great deal—the poſt is gone, ſo I will keep on, and tell you, Eliza, that I think I will put him out of ſuſpenſe the next time he comes.

What a charming winter-piece has my Eliza's deſcriptive pen drawn for her Maria, who always is in raptures with her painting.—But adieu, my dear, till next poſt.

My reſolution did not evaporate in ſleep, my dear; but the next time I

ſaw

ſaw Mr. Clarkſon, I heſitatingly ſpoke to him in this manner :—I have of late, you know, Sir, permitted you to make profeſſions which I really believe are as ſincere as ardent ; it has not been, nor is it in my power to return that ardour —(he trembled prodigiouſly) but if you will venture to receive my hand, on ſuch terms as it is in my power to offer, my nature is not ungrateful, and hope to do my duty—and beſides, I have ſix thouſand pounds.

I will not pretend to deſcribe his words, or his manner, if I thought them ſomewhat extravagant, how would it appear to my cool and wiſe friend.

We think to take a ſmall neat houſe in London, for the remainder of the winter,

winter, and perhaps may fix our abode in this village the enſuing ſummer, as it will be an eaſy diſtance for Mr. Clarkſon.

Thus you ſee my lot is like to be caſt in the middle ſtation—Give me neither poverty nor riches, ſaid the wiſe man. I can't give vent to my grateful and affectionate heart to Jack till ſome ſhips go out. In the mean time, my Eliza will think "I am ſometimes in heaven for him."

Will it not be better for me to continue here till the indiſſoluble knot is tied? Were I to accept of Mrs. Rowe's invitation, it might not be quite agreeable to Clarkſon, as they ſeemed to think him not quite equal to what I might now expect.

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But

But this is of a reaſonable length. I am, my dear Eliza, with increaſing reſpect and affection,

Yours, moſt ſincerely,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LET-

LETTER LXXI.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

CLARKSON has not been near me theſe two days, my dear, at which I am a little ſurprized.

Never was man more rapturous, as I told you, than he, at my opening my ſentiments ſo frankly; and indeed he was hardly ever from me.

Perhaps this good man may be like the reſt of them, and ſhuns a thing when

when it appears to be within his reach, or perhaps he may have doubts about the permanence of a happineſs built chiefly on his own paſſion; but whatever may be the cauſe of this remiſſneſs, believe me, my dear, I ſhall not deck my brow with the plaintive willow.

Clarkſon is a man of ſenſe and virtue, I firmly believe; but if any caprice ſhould diſcover him to be otherwiſe, why our connexions will eaſily be diſſolved: my partiality is founded on eſteem—take away the cauſe, and the effect will ceaſe.—I did not know I had ſo much pride, but I really find myſelf affronted.

He is come, it ſeems; I have a good mind to ſay, I am buſy, and not ſee

 him—

him—pack up my alls, and take a poſt chaiſe in the morning and go down to you, my dear, emulate your bright example, and devote myſelf to a ſingle life of benevolence; but ſuch precipitation would look like the caprices of a loveſick girl, ſo I will hear what he has to ſay.

Clarkſon was in mourning—I believe I was ſtately, for his countenance fell, but bowing low, he ſaid, I ſee, dear madam, by the unuſual ſeverity of your ingenuous countenance, that you are diſpleaſed. I have been arming myſelf to meet your anger, as a neceſſary conſequence of my behaviour, ſuch as it muſt appear to you; but I can ill bear it, though but for a few moments; for ſo well I know your candour, that when I have given

you

you the true ſtate of things, I truſt it will not be long ere a ſmile of forgiveneſs eradicates thoſe lovely features, and diſpels my anxiety.

Sure enough I ſmiled, my dear, immediately, and yet I was not quite pleaſed neither; however, it emboldened him to take my hand, and we both ſat down.

Well, Sir, I am prepared to hear the ſtory which you have introduced with ſuch a pompous prologue.

When I laſt parted from the charmer of my heart, I found waiting for me a meſſenger from my great uncle (whom I mentioned once to you). I was obliged to ſet out immediately. I could get no meſſenger at that late hour, or could I apprize you by the poſt; we

travelled

travelled all night—the old gentleman had been dead two hours when I reached his houſe in Nottinghamſhire.—I have left his remains unburied to fly to my lovely Miſs Barlowe, to chace from her mind even the ſhadow of a ſuſpicion, that her faithful Clarkſon could be diſreſpectful or inconſtant.

But how came you to be in mourning ſo ſoon?

Why, coming through London, I fitted myſelf in a quarter of an hour, as I muſt go and do the laſt offices for the poor old man; and there is no taylor very near his houſe, it ſaves time beyond expreſſion—precious, ſince it is devoted to you.—But is my excuſe a good one—do you forgive me?

Why,

you the true ſtate of things, I truſt it will not be long ere a ſmile of forgiveneſs eradicates thoſe lovely features, and diſpels my anxiety.

Sure enough I ſmiled, my dear, immediately, and yet I was not quite pleaſed neither; however, it emboldened him to take my hand, and we both ſat down.

Well, Sir, I am prepared to hear the ſtory which you have introduced with ſuch a pompous prologue.

When I laſt parted from the charmer of my heart, I found waiting for me a meſſenger from my great uncle (whom I mentioned once to you). I was obliged to ſet out immediately. I could get no meſſenger at that late hour, or could I apprize you by the poſt; we travelled

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Why,

Why, yes; to be ſure I am not mortally offended, and you really look very well in mourning—he kiſſed my hand.

So well I knew the delicacy of your ſentiments, that till you had forgiven me, I would not mention that this demiſe enables me to preſent you with twelve hundred pounds a year, and a capital ſum of ready money.

Was not his generoſity enhanced by his manner, my dear. I replied, indeed Mr. Clarkſon, I am pleaſed with your delicacy; and I added, my dear Eliza will be pleaſed with it too. He ſtaid with me to a late hour, and then ſet out to bury his uncle.—Before we parted, I conſented to an early day.

And now, my dear, don't you think this match will pleaſe all my good friends

friends that are attached to pecuniary matters? For my own part, it added not one jot of felicity to my proſpects. To ſay I have not the common feelings of a young woman, would be affecting a preſumptuous ſuperiority; but then as I look upon myſelf as accountable to heaven in the application of ſuch a fortune, the care annexed to it are quite equal to the gratifications which my youth and vanity may delight in. The middle ſtation was the boundary of my wiſhes; but if Providence ſees fit I ſhould be ſomething higher, may I not hope, that with diffedence and humility I may be uſeful and happy too.

I ſhall now, my dear, requeſt the pleaſure of your company in London, next Thurſday fortnight; Mr. Clark-

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ſon will ſend a carriage for you, and it will be a cordial to my coward heart.

We now propoſe to take an handſome ready-furniſhed houſe, for a few months, and then retire to the ſeat in Nottinghamſhire—rural life will never loſe its value in my eſtimation, but a few of the town amuſements will enhance that value. Come, Eliza, and ſhare them with us.

You uſed to ſpeak with ſome degree of pleaſure on the amuſements of the theatre; Garrick is in his full meridian; indeed a theatrical ſtar of the firſt magnitude.—Could the Bettertons and Booths ever exceed him? ſure it is impoſſible.

Indeed, my dear, there are many amuſements worthy of you in this great

great assemblage of evrey thing curious and uncommon. Pray let me hear from you; but do not mortify with a denial,

Your most affectionate,

MARIA BARLOWE.

LETTER LXXII.

TO

MISS BARLOWE.

My dear Maria,

YOUR cup of felicity ſeems to be ſo near full, that you may well bear the little mortification this will contain, that of my refuſing your invitation, if ſo joyful an occaſion as that of Maria's becoming the wife of a man who ſeems worthy of her, cannot draw me to London, nothing will.

But

But, my dear, I deteſt London, and will never ſee it again; it is connected with ſome diſagreeable ideas, which I wiſh to obliterate for ever.

You ſee, my dear, I do not mortify you in every thing—I keep your note, and am in treaty for this ſpot, which makes ſo conſpicuous a figure in our correſpondence.

And, further, I promiſe you to go and ſee you in Nottinghamſhire; but I ſicken at the thoughts of another winter's journey.

O, my good girl, how do I rejoice that virtue like yours is temporally rewarded, becauſe (as we have before obſerved) we cannot perſuade the young to ſtay for ſpiritual recompenſes.

I perfectly agree with you, that this large addition of fortune will not eſſentially increaſe your happineſs; but it cannot diminiſh it, if you are humble and vigilant.

Some old man, whoſe maxims have been printed, ſays, "A rich perſon ſails in a barge, and thoſe who are not ſo rich ſail in a boat, and that is all the difference." However, to purſue the ſimily, a barge, I preſume, can better weather a ſquall of wind than a little boat.

May you, my dear Maria, be wafted ſmoothly down the ſtream of time; the Pilot you have choſen (I truſt) will ſteer you ſafe to the end of it. This is an extenſive wiſh, reaching to eternity.

You

You are convinced how much I am to all intents and purposes,

Your real and

unalterable friend,

E. HARWOOD.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

THIS is Wedneſday, my dear, and to-morrow, of courſe, will be Thurſday. I have been much engaged in the intermediate ſpace between my laſt letter and this.

A ready furniſhed houſe is taken, and a carriage ready. I have paid my reſpects to Mr. Clarkſon's mother, a very

very decent woman, well ſtricken in years; his ſiſter a plain, but I believe, good young woman, and ſhe has undertaken to put all things in order, and to have a dinner ready to-morow, after (ah! my dear, my heart ſinks while I write it) we are married.—And yet, why it ſhould ſink I know not; but alas! I am not in love, perhaps if I were, a thing of this conſequence would ſink ſuch a fooliſh heart as mine.

Why is your preſence denied me? Excuſe this petulance. I would not wiſh to avail myſelf at the expence of your quiet; in ſhort, I don't know what I would wiſh. Mr. and Mrs. Rowe only accompany us—he is to be father, as they call it. This important affair, big with the fate of Maria, not of Rome, is to be tranſacted in London,

don, at a church near our habitation.

I have bought ſome cloaths, the beſt, not very unlike what was purchaſed ſo long ago, only as that was pink, this is blue; but I have many changes of raiment, and to-morrow, as the cuſtom is, ſhall be dreſſed in white. Clarkſon has preſented me with the uſual paraphernalia of a young bride who is to figure in genteel life.

My dear, you may ſee I am not in tip-top ſpirits by my ſtile, not ſo Clarkſon, he ſeems to tread on air, but I will ſay my prayes and retire to bed, for you muſt know I have not ſlept well for ſome nights, and look but very ſo-ſo. You ſhall have the reſidue next poſt.

Well,

Well, my dear, 'tis all over; the ſun did not ſhine, but does that ſignify, Eliza? They ſay happy is the bride that it ſhines upon. Superſtition, you ſee, is not ſatisfied without blazing ſunſhine in the midſt of Winter.

I have ſtolen from the company to ſcribble to you, and to weep. Would you believe it I ſhed abundance of tears during the ceremony; but here comes the exulting bridegroom to tear me from you.

Friday.—Mr. and Mrs. Rowe will continue a few days with us, as will Mrs. Clarkſon and her daughter, and then they will ſettle in ſmall apartments in town. We have been taking a little airing; and I hope to conclude this letter

letter with ſome degree of chearfulneſs.

So you will, if God ſpares us, meet me in Nottinghamſhire.

I entreat you, my dear Eliza, to bring all the letters I have written to you. I have preſerved all yours. I think they will afford us an afternoon's amuſement, and Mr. Clarkſon ſhall then ſee what were my ſentiments reſpecting him from the firſt.

You are buying the cottage, but have you ſufficient to purchaſe the whole of the little domain?

We muſt build a little temple in ſome corner, ſacred to friendſhip, where once a year, pleaſe God, we

will meet. They ſay female friendſhip is always diſſolved by marriage; but ours will be cemented, for Mr. Clarkſon's heart is not narrow, and ſure there is room ſufficient for Eliza and him in that of

MARIA CLARKSON.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

TO

MRS. CLARKSON.

YES, my dear, God willing, I will ſee you in Nottinghamſhire.

I have carefully kept your letters, and ſhall preſerve them as relicks. The number, I fancy, will not be much increaſed, for the cataſtrophe is now wound up in the manner I wiſhed it ſhould.

So

So joy, joy, to you and the happy Mr. Clarkſon, is all at preſent from

Your moſt faithful

and affectionate

ELIZA HARWOOD.

LETTER LXXV.

TO

MISS HARWOOD.

MY dear Eliza, I am quite happy and reconciled to my lot, and would wiſh no young timid woman hereafter to be afraid to enter into this ſtate, if ſhe finds not that ardent and tumultuous inclination, which ſhe thinks ought to be a prelude to marriage. I am an happy exception to that rule; every day riſes on me with increaſe of heartfelt pleaſure, for which my ſpirit overflows

overflows in gratitude to heaven; the cup muſt be delicious where religion and love are ſo ſweetly mixed.

We went laſt night, my dear, to ſee the comedy of the Wonder, and the inimitable Garrick.

My indulgent Mr. Clarkſon had taken a box, and deſired me to dreſs myſelf, which I did (to pleaſe him) to the greateſt advantage, in my blue and ſilver, and all my ſparkling ornaments; as my heart was at eaſe I cut no deſpicable figure, neither did Mr. Clarkſon, with his manly and open countenance, brightened with looks of complacency and love.

The houſe was prodigiouſly full, as is always the caſe when Mr. Garrick exhibits.

We had ſome buſtle to get to our places, ſo that I did not immediately regard who ſat in the next box; when I did, who ſhould I ſee but Brightley and his wife; he was ſtaring full at us; when my eye caught his, he bowed very low, and I returned the compliment; his wife turned at the inſtant, but gave a kind of indignant toſs with her head, and pulled him to ſit down by her; ſhe whiſpered him ſeveral times in the courſe of the entertainment, and affected to laugh, but the gentleman did not ſeem to reliſh her jokes.

Mr. Clarkſon and I were both inclined to laugh, but it was at the comedy, and not at them; though I could have wiſhed, my dear, they had not been there, for really Brightley

fixed his eyes ſo conſtantly and intenſely upon us, and there was ſuch a kind of contrition in his countenance, that I dare ſay the lady did not above half like it; but I took care never to meet his eye again.

You will allow for a little exultation on my part, as I could look down with a degree of contempt on a man who had uſed me ſo ungenerouſly.

Mrs. Brightley is very big with child for the time they have been married.

At laſt ſhe ſeemed downright in the pouts, and (I ſuppoſe he was obliged to attend her) they left the houſe before the end of the play. Mr. Clarkſon whiſpered, and ſaid, my dear, your

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your being here ſeems to have put Mrs. Brightley in the pouts; I wiſh it don't produce a curtain lecture. I ſhould be ſorry for that, replied I. I believe, ſaid he, they are unpalatable things, but you have never yet let me know what they are; I anſwered the whole need no phyſician. Poor Brightley has been unwell a long time.——Clarkſon would have ſnatched a kiſs if we had not been in public.

We ſtaid the whole of the entertainment, and enjoyed our little regale at home. My Clarkſon's hours are not embittered by reflecting on the tears he has drawn from the eyes of any believing maid; or are your Maria's by thinking ſhe poſſeſſes a heart to which another has the ſhadow of a claim.

That

That the paths of rectitude are the only paths of peace, my Eliza who has trod them the longeſt, always declares;--that we may never deviate from thoſe paths, is the ardent and unfeigned prayer of, my dear Eliza,

Your moſt affectionate,

and obliged friend,

MARIA CLARKSON.

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